ISLAM

HER

MORAL & SPIRITUAL VALUES

MAJ. ARTHUR GLYN LEONARD
Forward by : SYED AMIR ALI

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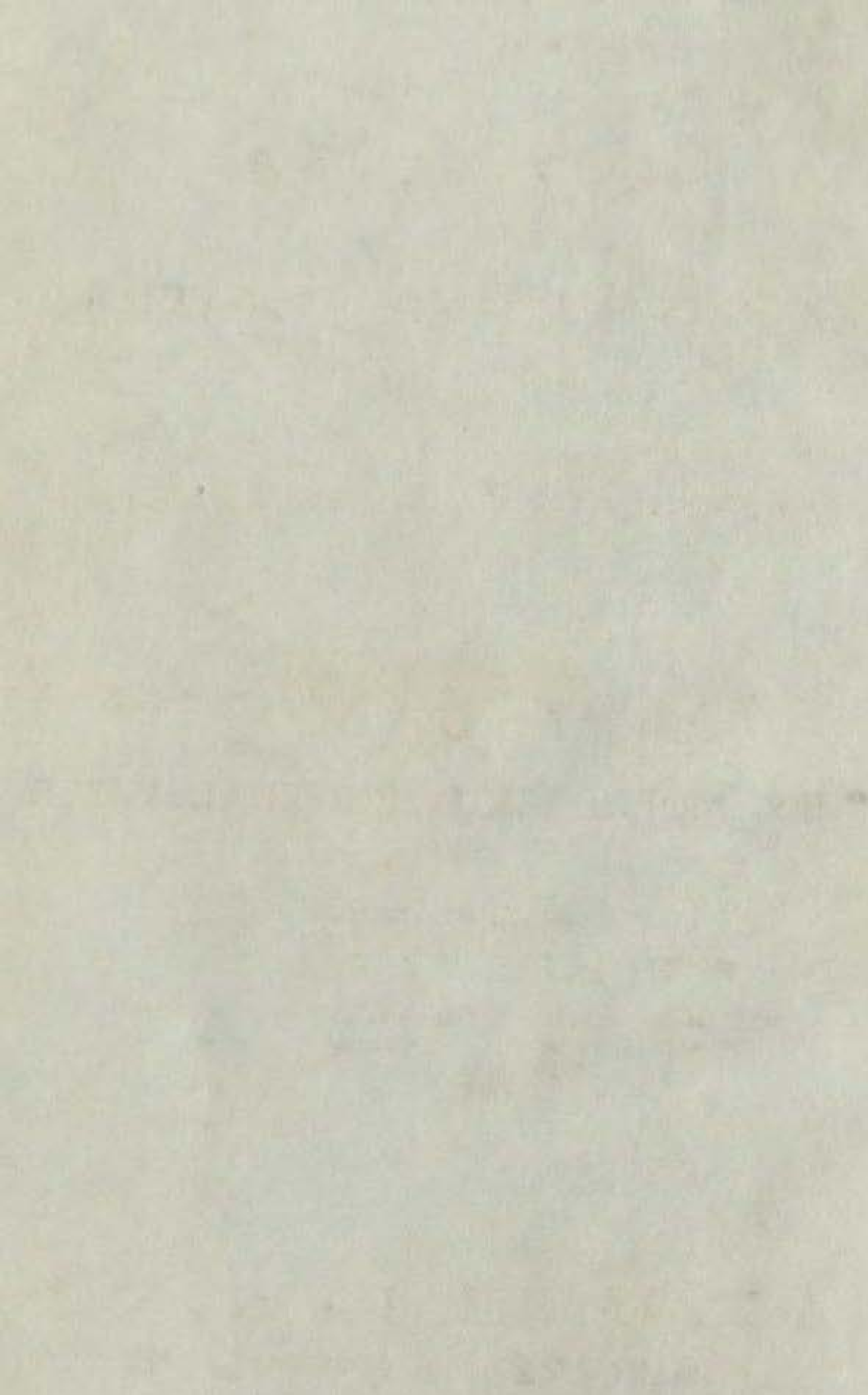
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ISLAM

HER MORAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUE

A Rational and Psychological Study

By

MAJOR ARTHUR GLYN LEONARD

LATE 2ND BATT. EAST LANCASHIRE REGIMENT

Author of "The Camel, Its Uses and Management," "How we made Rhodesia," "The Lower Niger and its Tribes"

With a Foreword by

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FOREWORD

I AM glad to introduce this book with an expression of the pleasure and interest with which I have read Major Leonard's admirable psychological study of a subject, the importance of which it is hardly possible to overrate.

Unfortunately it has been too common hitherto to regard Islam as an antagonistic force to Christendom; to depreciate its Founder and to discount its Ideals. As the author justly observes, it is hardly possible for a student really anxious to acquaint himself with the inner spirit of another Faith, to gain an insight into its true character until he has divested himself of ancient prejudices that narrow his perspective and prevent his taking a broad view of the aims and aspirations of the great men who from time to time have tried to uplift humanity.

Major Leonard has dealt with his subject in this broad spirit; he has approached it with sympathy born of intimate acquain

tance with races and peoples who profess the Faith of Islam. His is eminently a philosophical study of its Founder, of its true moral and spiritual utility, and of the great impetus it gave to the progress of the world.

In the eight chapters that constitute this book he has discussed the entire range of questions affecting the personality of Mohammed and the tendency of his religion. In his treatment he shows himself a philosophical rationalist animated with a reverence for the Arabian Teacher—the evident outcome of a true appreciation of the mainspring of his actions.

In the first chapter the author has applied himself to expose the absurdity and hollowness of the Pan-Islamic "bogey." That the growing *rapprochement* between Moslem communities, hitherto divided by sectarian feuds, should be viewed with disfavour by Europe as indicating a danger to its predominance and selfish ambitions is intelligible. But that it should be regarded as a deliberate challenge to, or intended as a hostile demonstration against Christendom, is a mere chimera. Major Leonard proves conclusively that the

Pan-Islamic movement is no modern political movement; but that morally and spiritually Islam, in its very essence, is Pan-Islamic; in other words, a creed that recognizes in practice the brotherhood of man to a degree unknown in any other religion, and admits in its commonwealth no difference of race, colour or rank.

Moslems, laymen and scholars, will probably not agree with some of Major Leonard's remarks in his outline of the Prophet's character and temperament; but they must all acknowledge his sincerity. He describes Mohammed as a great and true man—great not only as a teacher, but as a patriot and statesman; a material as well as a spiritual builder, who constructed a nation and an enduring Faith, which holds, to a greater degree than most others, the hearts of millions of human beings; a man true to himself and his people, but above all to his God.

The author has gone to the Koran itself for the animating purpose of Mohammed's strenuous and noble life. He believes that the national good to be obtained only by the recognition of the conception of a God who is both "national and universal" was the

dominant idea that impelled and inspired the Prophet of Arabia. In his appreciation of Mohammed's teachings, Major Leonard has grasped the real spirit of Islam; and both as regards his moral and spiritual precepts, as also the enunciations respecting the duties of every-day life, the author has given the Arabian Prophet his due. He dwells on Mohammed's affection and sympathy for the weak, the afflicted and suffering, with the orphan and the stricken; on his humanity to the dumb creatures of God; on the duties of parents to children, and of children to parents; on his burning denunciations of the terrible crime of female infanticide.

In the eighth and last chapter Major Leonard speaks of the debt Europe owes to Islam, and endeavours to show that the religion of Mohammed, far from being antagonistic to human development, has materially helped in the progress of the world. It is part of Major Leonard's thesis that Christianity and Islam belong to "different spheres of influence"; in other words, whilst Christianity is united to certain races, Islam is peculiarly united to others. Races and peoples adapt their religions to their own respective advance-

ment, and the same religion varies among different communities according to the stage of their development. The Christianity of the barbarous South American Guacho is not the same as that of the cultured Englishman, nor is the Islam of the cultivated Moslem identical with that professed by ignorant followers of the Faith. But it would be hard to say that philosophical Christianity exactly answers the needs of the lower strata of Christendom to whom the positive directions of a simple practical faith might appeal with greater force. Might not Islam, with its emphatic prohibition of drink, the primary cause of all the vice and crime in Europe, prove a far greater civilizing agency in the slums of European cities, and do far more good in reclaiming the debased, than a religion which does not possess that positive character and is only adapted for idealistic minds.

Whatever view a rationalist may hold on this point, I feel that Major Leonard has laid the world of literature under a debt for his admirable monograph on a peculiarly interesting subject.

AMEER ALI.

ment and the same religion varies among different communities according to the stage of their development. The Christianity of the ignorant South American Gaucho is not the same as that of the cultured Englishman, nor is the Islam of the cultivated Moslem identical with that professed by ignorant followers of the Faith. But it would be hard to say that the cultured Christianity exactly answers the needs of the lower strata of Christendom to which the positive directions of a simple definite faith might appeal with greater force. Whilst the Islam, with its emphatic prohibition of drink, the primary cause of all the vice and crime in Europe, proves a far greater civilising agency in the life of humble classes, and do far more good in the [illegible] than a religion which does not possess that positive character and is only adapted for cultured minds.

Whatever view a statesman may hold on this point I feel that Major Leonard has laid the world of literature under a debt for his admirable monograph on a peculiarly interesting subject.

AMEER ALI

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CHAPTER I

THE SO-CALLED MOSLEM MENACE !

FOR some time past, but more especially during the last year or two, it has become quite the fashion in Europe to rail at and to suspect the good faith and motives of the Moslem world. If we are to believe the European Press, Europe is in deadly danger. The "*Yellow Peril*" of a few years ago has, by means of the juggling of modern journalism, cleverly transformed itself into the "*Moslem Menace.*" According to this trenchant successor of the ancient oracle, there is unrest and seething turmoil everywhere. In Egypt, a national confederation ; in Morocco, a crisis ; in the heart of Africa, the Senussi movement ; in Turkey and Arabia, secret associations and agitation ; in Persia even, disaffection but co-operation. In one word, Europe—Christian, civilized and unoffending Europe—is confronted with a Pan-Islamic confederation, that is co-operating to achieve the unity and the nationalization of all Islam, with the express object of ultimately turning upon Christendom, and rending her into a thousand tattered fragments.

That there has been no revival of "the chronic conspiracy" within our Indian Empire, is, however, easily explained. This, which purposed to be a religious agitation among Indian Moslems, was an expression more familiar twenty-five years ago and was attributed to the influence of Wahabite oratory. It is, of course, possible that the present agitation and unrest among the Hindus generally, but the Bengalis in particular, has for the time being at all events diverted the attention of the outside world in other directions. But it is also more or less generally taken for granted that the Moslem population of India has sunk into a state of political lethargy, which if it does not betoken loyalty, obviously demonstrates a dumb and passive revolutionary torpor that is tantamount to it.

That agitation and unrest exist throughout the Moslem world would be nothing either new or unusual. In a human sense, Islam is identical with Christendom. She too has her social functions, her political parties, associations, confederations and societies. She has her religious sects and denominations. As with us, so with Islam, there are affinities, and antipathies, emulations and jealousies, competitions and rivalries, likes and dislikes, envy, malice, hatred and all uncharitableness. The interest of self pre-

dominates before all else. In kind there is certainly no difference, in degree it is possible that Europe may be a step or two higher. But this is not the point that I would here emphasize. To fall back on the time-honoured maxim, immortalized by Shakespeare, comparisons of this kind are incompatible if not odious. Besides, recrimination is as futile as it is injudicious and undignified.

It is not of moral discrepancies on either side that I would speak. Nor have I any wish to rake up the low-lying sediment, or to disturb the still waters which are running deep in the great ocean of Moslem life. Under the conditions that prevail, it is assuredly best to let sleeping dogs lie. Left alone they are much less troublesome. There is always the possibility that they may oversleep themselves and fall into a dormant and inactive state. In this way the still waters of sedition and agitation soon find their own level—the embers of revolt may at times flare up, but they soon flicker out.

It is of the moral and spiritual utility, with the soul of Islam, that I am now about to deal. For Islam, believe me, has a soul—a sincere and earnest soul, a great and profound soul—that is worth knowing. It is in this soul that the whole kernel and essence of Islam lies. A thorough knowledge and a clear comprehension of this great spirit will alone enable

the statesmen and thinkers of Europe to understand the complex problems of so-called Pan-Islamism. To obtain this grasp, however, certain qualifications are absolutely essential. It is necessary—e.g., to approach the subject from a rational and reasonable standpoint—to detach the mind from all preconceived dogmas and opinions; to lay aside all prejudices, racial, religious, social and otherwise, and all bigotries and intolerance; to be confined to no one creed, sect or denomination of any kind, sort or description, but the one great world of Humanity that, in the eyes of Nature, is of one soul and body. This may be a large, or as cousin Jonathan would call it, a tall, order. It bulks big and sounds ponderous. In face of what human nature is, it appears impracticable. But even in human nature there are exceptions and possibilities. An aspect such as this, then, though improbable, is certainly possible, if exceptional. Let us presume at least that in this instance it is so. It is, at all events, on these broad lines that the following pages have been written. It is the true spirit of human sympathy and fellowship that has moved me—the sympathy and fellowship that would draw together, or at least nearer to each other, the worlds of Christendom and Islam.

The better to achieve my object, I have

consulted no works on either Mohammed or Islam, but have gone straight to the source or fountain head—to Mohammed himself, the Koran, and to Moslems of various nationalities with whom I have been brought into close and personal touch during a wide and a varied experience. It is here in the man and his work that the true soul of Islam is to be found. Just as in its founders and foundations lies the heart and essence of Christianity, it is in and out of the merits as well as demerits of Mohammed's work, that we shall form the true estimate of Islamic utility. By their fruits ye shall know them. Men do not gather figs of thorns, or grapes of thistles. Mohammed most certainly did not. As he sowed, so he has reaped! So he is still reaping. The Koran was the immediate consequence of his concentration and communion with Nature and Nature's God: Islam the natural result. In other words, Islam is the devotion of Moslems to Mohammed and the Koran—his work, plus their patient resignation and entire submission to God, His will and His service! The man of fixed and unchanging purpose has a supreme contempt for obstacles. But when, as in Mohammed's case, that purpose is the glorification of God, he has at hand a lever that can move the world. In this peculiar sense the great Prophet of Arabia was self-contained. He

had everything within himself: that everything centred in God and Arabian unity. He sought only what he needed. This was to unify God and his country. How he succeeded is a matter of history.

D'Aubigné in his history of the Reformation, speaking of Luther, says: "Men, when designed by God to influence their contemporaries, are first seized and drawn along by the peculiar tendencies of their age." Undoubtedly this, in a great measure, is so. It is quite evident that Mohammed was influenced in this way. Yet it is also obvious that he was not so much seized by the peculiar tendencies of his age (for in many ways he was far in advance of it), as that he was obsessed and dominated by the energy or spirit of God, and utilized these special features with the design of disseminating this overmastering God possession to others.

"There are but three sorts of persons," Pascal used to say: "those who serve God, having found Him; those who employ themselves in seeking Him, not having found Him; and those who live without seeking Him or having found Him. The first are reasonable and happy; the last are mad and miserable; the intermediate are miserable and reasonable."

If ever man on this earth found God, if ever man devoted his life to God's service with

a good and a great motive, it is certain that the Prophet of Arabia was that man. That on the whole and in the truest sense of the word he was reasonable, is best seen in the result which his labour achieved. That he was happy, is quite another matter. Real as is our existence, happiness at best is but an ephemeral phase of it. Yet there is much truth in the assertion, that gaiety seeks the crowd, while happiness loves silence and solitude as Mohammed himself did. In any case, if the satisfaction which ensues as the consequence of duty done, and well done, is happiness; if the consciousness that he has done his best in all sincerity and conscientiousness, gives happiness to the ego, then it is possible to assume that in bequeathing the grand heritage of Islam to posterity, Mohammed must have gone to his final rest in a state of supreme happiness.

Self-belief—"that thing given to man by his Creator," as Carlyle calls it—was, as I shall show, a salient feature in Mohammed's character. More than half a Bedawin (or what was practically the same thing, passing a great part of his life in deserts), this was only natural. But he did not allow this self-consciousness to degenerate, either into vanity or egotism. It neither spoilt nor conquered him. He knew his own weakness—none better—therefore relied all the more on the power of God.

It was this outside influence which reacted on him so powerfully from within. It was this judicious blend or amalgam of two seemingly different thought-currents, which were in reality only a bifurcation of the same current, that gave him all his strength. It was this unique combination of an apparent dualism (through intense mental concentration) in one divine Monism that gave Mohammed victory over every obstacle. It was this compressed one-ness—the most sublime triumph of individual concentration in the world's history—that carried Islam into the uttermost parts of the earth. It was this centralization of moral or religious gravity that swelled the belief of one man—a modest camel-driving trader only—into the perfervid belief of hundreds of millions. "For given a sincere man, you have given a thing worth attending to. Since sincerity, what is it but a divorce from earth and earthly feelings?"

One thing more. To thoroughly comprehend the spirit of Mohammed or the soul of Islam, the student himself must be thoroughly in earnest and sincere. He must in addition possess that moral, mental and intellectual sympathy which gives the ego an insight into human subtleties as well as simplicities. He must take Mohammed and Islam as he finds them—in the same intensely sincere spirit that constituted the one and

inculcated the other. He must at the outset recognize that Mohammed was no mere spiritual pedlar, no vulgar time-serving vagrant, but one of the most profoundly sincere and earnest spirits of any age or epoch. A man not only great, but one of the greatest—i.e. truest—men that Humanity has ever produced. Great, i.e. not simply as a prophet, but as a patriot and a statesman: a material as well as a spiritual builder who constructed a great nation, a greater empire, and more even than all these, a still greater Faith. True, moreover, because he was true to himself, to his people, and above all to his God. Recognizing this, he will thus acknowledge that Islam is a profound and true cult, which strives to uplift its votaries from the depths of human darkness upwards into the higher realm of Light and Truth. It is in this deep sense of earnestness, and in this tense but even-minded spirit of equity, that I have endeavoured to make my study both rational and psychological: in other words, reasonable and true to the spirit. Naturally, therefore, I have avoided those narrow and devilish pitfalls of racial, creedal and colour prejudices—that awful curse of Humanity, that insuperable barrier to the cult of Humanitarianism—which leads to the deadly cancer of *Misconception*. Finally—making due allowance for space limitations—I have endeavoured

to the best of my ability to get to the root of all that is good and great in the immortal work of this leader of men who was so good and so great in every sense. In this way only is it possible to get at the truth. Shallow, superficial and paradoxical inquiries are mere empty vanities as utterly useless, from a human standpoint, as those which are biassed and one-sided. To reach the depths, to touch the bottom, to get to the root of any true man's motives, sincerity and thoroughness are as essential as intellectual acumen and profundity.

In this short study my one idea all through has been to delineate Mohammed as he was and Islam as she is. For this reason I have neither painted them with my own colouring, nor introduced into their natural complexion any outside flesh tints. In plain English, I have not placed upon their beliefs and principles a construction that, being ethnically foreign to the entire sociological system upon which they are based, would have been a fundamental error, at complete variance with them.

CHAPTER II

AN OUTLINE OF MOHAMMED'S TEMPERAMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS

ONE of the first thoughts that a very careful perusal of the Koran brings home to me, is the intense humanity of Mohammed and his work. The more one studies the various motives that led to his so-called revelations, the more one is struck by the strong associations that connect these divine messages and ordinances with the actions and movements that were going on all round him, as well as in his own mind—owing in a great measure to his own preaching.

In estimating the moral value of either Christianity or Islam, it is necessary to take into consideration, also to make allowance for, the times in which their founders lived. To attempt to judge one or other of them from the scientific standpoint of modern culture and civilization would be not only uneven but impossible. To gauge the standard of their mental and moral attainments, the student must investigate their work, and compare, then contrast, it with the general intellectual level of their own age. When

this has been done, he should try and, if possible, realize what effect the advent and the doctrines advocated by them (in the one case some 1,900 years, and in the other 1,300 years ago) would now produce. In this way only is it feasible to arrive at a true and legitimate conclusion. But in doing so, the inquirer must divest, certainly dissociate himself, from all existing ideas on the subject, and deal with it as it is, and not what he thinks it ought to be.

The more one studies the Koran, the more obvious does it become that Mohammed had a powerfully receptive mind, and a specially retentive memory. Notwithstanding that he was illiterate, unable even to read and write, it is clear that he was well versed in all the tenets and traditions of his own people and of the Jews; and that in addition he had made himself acquainted with some of the doctrines and dogmas of the Christian Gospels. It is above all certain that for a great number of years Mohammed concentrated his mind thereon with the force and intensity of a sincere and ardent nature. But first and foremost the one great idea of the being, unity and providence of God predominated all his thoughts. Acting on a temperament that was highly emotional, and perceptibly neurotic or melancholic the revelations embodied in the Koran were the natural result of so long and con-

tinuous a concentration. Still it is equally obvious that combining with this emotionalism and neurasthenia was a strong vein of commercialism and common sense, also marked political and administrative ability. It is further evident that in Mohammed's character there commingled a very curious and conflicting number of elements and tendencies. Dominating all of these, however, was an intense zeal, an insatiable ambition, an overpowering individuality and egotism, and an inflexible doggedness and determination to attain his own ends. To convert, that is, the weakness and disintegration of the various tribes that composed the Arab nation into the union of one consolidated whole, with himself and family at its head, as a human representation of the unity and supremacy of the one and only God. This latter, as we know, was in no way original. It is clear all throughout that he had profited from his knowledge of Jewish tradition and experience, and that he based his theory on the dogmas of Moses and Abraham. He had long since realized that it was the worship of their own tribal and communal gods by the members of the various Arab tribes and communities that accentuated the differences and divisions between them. He determined, therefore, as the Jewish leaders long before him had attempted, to consolidate

and weld them into a single nation, through the worship of the one supreme and indivisible God. It was on and through this divine indivisibility that he decided to base and construct the unity and nationalization of the people.

Unquestionably Mohammed's movement was as much political as it was religious, as much material as it was spiritual. But being of a profoundly reflective, at the same time of a practical, turn of mind, he chose religion as the only possible and thoroughly reliable means of achieving his great and noble ends ; not only possible and thorough, however, but the most potential. Mohammed, in fact, judged the capacity and characteristics of his countrymen to a nicety. Unconsciously —for legislation to him was a natural heritage—he followed the example of the most famous legislators, and instituted such laws as at the time were the best that the people were capable of receiving. Tactful and diplomatic to a degree, it was policy on his part to retain a certain number of the old beliefs and customs in order to satisfy the people. He knew, none better, the fierce and turbulent temper of his countrymen, and how it was most politic to deal with them. In making this concession he showed his political wisdom, if not a certain breadth and greatness of statecraft. After all it was, from an independent stand-

point, but a small concession as compared to the prize that he got in return for it. It was a compromise in other words. Yet this and his own evidence in the Koran is important as showing that Mohammed was not so much in a strict sense the orginator of a new creed as he was a reformer and the renovator of an old one. It was the impress of his great personality, distinguished as this was by the intense sincerity and earnestness of his nature, that has left its mark on human history.

Mohammed was a thinker and a worker not only for his own, but for all time. He recognized that man was equally a political and religious product of God's creation. He understood that as a counterpoise to man's materialism and to the destructive in his nature, is that indefinable essence which we call the spiritual and the constructive. The more one looks into and understands the Koran, the more obvious is it that Mohammed concentrated all the active and vigorous energies of his vivid and powerful imagination, also his virile mentality, on the accomplishment of his great design. For design it certainly was. The wish undoubtedly was father to the thought. Not, however, in an invidious sense, but in the firm conviction that design and not accident or chance is one of the controlling principles of God and His creation, and that, consistent with this principle, he, Mohammed,

had been chosen as the divine agent. Personal ambition and aggrandizement never for a moment entered his head, or formed part of it. The national good, to be attained only by a national or universal God—the one and only God of the universe—was the one great ambition that inspired and impelled him. Because although every one for himself and God for us all is presumably a natural law, Mohammed managed to evade it. But in evading it, he was not revolutionary. On the contrary, in this way he rose one step upward above the lower human level towards that higher humanity which approaches the divine.

This design, as I have just said, originated from the doctrine of divine unity attributed to Moses and Abraham. Indeed, as one reads the Koran carefully and steadily through from beginning to end, it is manifested in every surah—almost, in fact, on every page. The whole work, in fact, is saturated with the one idea, inspired by the one thought. Everywhere there is evidence of the final object in view, the unconquerable will, the inflexible resolve, the fixed purpose, the indomitable perseverance, the unyielding persistency, the infinite and interminable patience, the calm endurance, the irresistible courage, and the grim tenacity of the ego. So much so is this evident, that when I compare this determinism with the neurotic element in Mohammed's character,

I am obliged to admit that the balance remains with the former. Yet—and this I think is the strangest feature about this strange but commanding personality—there is no getting away from the fact that he was much under the influence of the latter.

It is, of course, possible that Mohammed was what in Arabia is called a "Saudawi," or person of melancholy temperament—what nowadays would be called a hypochondriacal dyspeptic. Melancholia is a complaint that the Arabs are subject to, students, philosophers and literary men more especially. A distaste for society, a longing for solitude, an unsettled habit of mind, and a neglect of worldly affairs are always attributed to it. It is very probably—to some extent at least—as Burton suggests, the effect of overworking the brain in a hot, dry atmosphere; also due in some measure to the highly nervous and bilious temperament constitutional to the Arabs: a temperament that in Mohammed's case was aggravated by excessive emotionalism.

It is clear that once Mohammed got hold of, or was obsessed by, the idea that he was God's chosen messenger, and that his sayings were inspired by God (a very old and primitive belief remember): or rather as soon as ever Khadija and others of his household were imbued with the idea, then he never relaxed his hold of it

for a moment. The confidence of those about him, his faithful spouse more especially, gave him confidence in himself. Confidence engendered conviction, and conviction led to the Koran and the ultimate triumph of his cause. That he was sincere in all this, there is not the slightest doubt, but in taking the measure of his sincerity we must be guided entirely by the fact that he was essentially a man who had long before made up his mind to bring about the unity of his country. Indeed the whole history of Khadija's association with the matter shows this. To be a prophet in his own country or household, a man must inspire respect, or the still greater feeling of veneration. No man, unless he is earnest and devout, could possibly impress the members of his family. They are bound to find him out. This applies all the more forcibly to an eastern household in which polygamy prevails, and that is made up of so many opposing elements and conflicting interests, the atmosphere of which is only too often one necessarily of envies, jealousies, rivalries, suspicions, intrigues, and even conspiracies. If Mohammed had been insincere, if instead of convictions, his belief had been a mere profession or a sham; if it had not been one of austere, rigid practice and self-denial, then those about him would neither have been impressed, nor would they have espoused his cause as warmly and valiantly as

they did. Not only were they impressed, however, but convinced, and it was their convictions that strengthened and confirmed his own faith. But once he had gained their confidence, his mission was assured. There was no doubt whatever then in his own mind that he was God's chosen apostle, to whom God had revealed His word—the words of truth and life. From this out, his own vigour, his own extraordinary individuality and inflexibility carried him through from beginning to end. Once others believed in and relied on him, his own latent self-reliance grew into a living and active factor that carried all before it. But as he looked at it, all his strength was from God. God was at his elbow and in his heart, therefore he could not fail. Nothing, in fact, shows better than this aspect of the matter how very wise and all-knowing (his constant refrain about God in the Koran) Mohammed himself was. How tactful and diplomatic, but above all, how deep his knowledge of human nature. Had Khadija and his household not believed in him, it is safe to assume that then there would have been no Prophet and no Islam. As Novalis says: "My conviction gains infinitely the moment another soul will believe in it." So it was with Mohammed. So it is with us all. So Carlyle pithily observes: "A false man found a religion? Why a false man cannot build a

brick house!" I have already shown that Mohammed was not false. But neither did he found a religion. Apart from the fact that he was a reality, and as true as any of the world's great prophets, Mohammed was unable to perform the impossible. Religion as a natural product was beyond his comprehension and potentialities. Islam like Christianity was a creed—a human or artificial development—the healthy and vigorous offspring of a noble and sublime, yet in no sense original conception. But there was no demerit in this want of originality. Because as Carlyle says: "The merit of originality is not novelty; it is sincerity": and with regard to Mohammed, this has been more than once acknowledged.

Launched upon the world of Arabia in no false and unreal spirit, but with the spirit of grim sincerity and earnestness, Islam has proved its stability spiritually and materially, the present result of which speaks for itself. It is enough to say that a creed whose followers now number over 250,000,000, or some 15 per cent. of the human race (an under rather than an over-estimate), could have sprung from a healthy and vigorous seed only—a seed that has been nourished and kept alive by the vital spark of human sympathies, hopes and aspirations.

What appears to me as so remarkable and

so significant, so truly characteristic of the man, is the way in which he never lets go his grip of the central idea and purpose, but follows it up step by step. And as he follows, he makes every point that he can, seizes every opportunity, takes every advàntage of every ordinary event and occurrence that is going on around him, makes the best of every reverse, turns even his set-backs and reverses into moral victories ; and accepts it all as inevitable with the calmness of a philosophy that emanated from his own wondrous egoism and that inexhaustible fund of patience and reserve of courage which so distinguishes his character. In this respect alone Mohammed truly was a remarkable man—a man infinitely above, not only his surroundings, but his age. With Mohammed, not only was the great fact of his own existence great to him, but in almost every page of the Koran it is obvious that God's omnipresence and omipotence had made a profound and lasting impression on him. Everywhere and in everything—in natural objects more especially—he saw and felt the hand and the power of God. And to him it was a power so overwhelmingly terrific and transcendent in all its aspects, that it defied description and demonstrated the insignificance and impotence of man. In more senses than one he was a pantheist. To him, either God was Nature and Nature God, or God was

in Nature and Nature was in God. At bottom of him the old primitive belief was there, but in unity and concentration he saw strength. In his mind there was no room, no place, for lesser deities. The power and the splendour of the one creative God—who lived and moved and had His being throughout the universe, overshadowed, or, rather, had absorbed, them all. In the grim silence of the desert, in the vastness of the heavens, in the great infinity of space, in the scintillation of the stars, in every fibre of his own consciousness, God was with him. To Mohammed God was not a personal being but the God and Maker of the universe and all mankind. With him the entire theme and volume of his stream of thought was God and his religion. Coming from the core and centre of him as it did, even through the long vista of thirteen centuries, one can picture this overmastering element in every line of his stern-set and yet gentle face : a face reflective and speaking, that not only had a history stamped upon every feature, but a great, a strenuous, and a commanding history. *In vino veritas* is as true to-day as when first it was uttered. So too the saw, that "mastership like wine unmasks the man." But Mohammed needed no unmasking. God and the truth—the truth about God as it dominated him—was the rich, strong wine which coursed through every vein and fibre of his mental organism, stimulating

and spurring him onwards to a sustained and continuous effort that ended only in death. A sincere and earnest man, a natural, therefore a deeply religious man, to him God was also a Dayyan (one of the ninety-nine epithets of God), i.e. "A weigher of good and evil"; One who computed and settled accounts; the holder of the even balance and scales of justice, the Judge and Arbiter of all mankind.

But apart from these functions, the power and sublimity of the Supreme Being, as he saw it expressed in the silent grandeur of the desert, the death-like stillness of the sandy sea, the frowning ruggedness and majesty of the mountains, the immense universality of Nature, was always before his eyes and in all his thoughts. Full of this feeling, of the awe and veneration innate in man and coexistent with the eternal ages, he bursts out in the second surah: "God! there is no God but He; the living, the self-subsisting: neither slumber nor sleep seizeth Him; to Him *belongeth* whatsoever is in heaven, and on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him, but through His good pleasure? He knoweth that which is past, and that which is to come unto them, and they shall not comprehend anything of His knowledge, but so far as He pleaseth. His throne is extended over heaven and earth, and the preservation

of both is no burden unto Him. He is the high and mighty."

As a natural outburst of emotions and convictions that had been pent up within his own inner consciousness, that were the offspring of some twenty years of journeyings to and fro across the deserts where "Amin" the faithful one was in direct and constant contact with Nature, and often in silent communion with the Infinite, these few words are truly magnificent and sublime; magnificent not only for the boldness and sublimity of their imagery and conception, but magnificent also with the intensity and profundity of true sincerity. Few, but all the more pithy for that, these words are from the heart and soul of the man—a man who speaks not unadvisedly with his lips, but who feels with every nerve and fibre of his intensely emotional being. They are (as he himself feels) the outpouring of an insignificant and impotent atom, yet of a sincere and earnest man approaching in all humility and veneration, and with the loyalty and allegiance of a true believer and servant, the great, invisible He, who holds him and all creatures in the hollow of His mighty hand.

In a conversation that Luther had one day with some friends at table, he spoke of the world as a vast and magnificent pack of cards composed of emperors, kings, princes and

so forth. For several ages these had been vanquished by the Pope. Then God had come upon the scene, and chosen the "ace," the very smallest card in the pack—himself, in a word—and overthrown this conqueror of worldly powers and principalities. Mohammed, as much as Luther, was one of "God's Aces." Seldom, indeed, in the history of the world, has so great a human river flowed from a source so puny. Never did the divine manifest itself in a single pip, so seemingly small and insignificant as a cause, yet so pre-eminently and consistently great as an effect !

"Men," says Dumas in one of his historico-romantic masterpieces, "are visible, palpable, moral. You can meet, attack, subdue them ; and when they are subdued you can subject them to trial and hang them. But ideas you cannot oppose in that way. They glide unseen ; they penetrate ; they hide themselves especially from the sight of those who would destroy them. Hidden in the depths of the soul, they there throw out deep roots. The more you cut off the branches which imprudently appear, the more powerful and inextirpable become the roots below.

"An idea is a young giant which must be watched night and day ; for the idea which yesterday crawled at your feet, to-morrow will dispose of your head. An idea is a spark

falling upon straw." . . . "For the mind of man is no inert receptacle of knowledge, but absorbs and incorporates into its own constitution the ideas which it receives." Thus it was with Mohammed. God was the spark, the vital spark of spiritual flame, and this humble but honest Arab trader was the straw, that after twenty years of silent but tenacious smouldering God had set a light to.

The better, however, to understand his character and purpose, we must divide his life into two sections. The first when, as trader from the age of thirteen up to forty, first for his uncle and then for Khadija, he was the man of business. Yet synchronous with this the man of ideas and ideals that he kep to himself however; that he divulged to no one. For not until the time was ripe and the hour had come, not until he felt the call—felt, that is, that he was ready and able to begin—did he confide even in Khadija. The second section when, as the apostle of God, he worked with all the fiery fervour yet steady zeal of a true prophet, to put his ideas into practice. But there was this difference with regard to Mohammed as a theorist. He was not a man of many ideas. In reality one central idea alone inspired him. But great and magnificent as that was, it was equal to a multitude. It was a growing and a

spreading giant which, like the prolific banyan tree, threw out branch and root with such extravagant luxuriance, that it completely overshadowed and predominated the entire expanse of his mental area. We know what this idea was. We know that round and out of the central stem of God's overmastering unity Mohammed had determined to construct an Arabian nation—possibly something even greater. We know, too, that the one was but the offspring of the other. Or it may be that they were the twin offspring of all this profound and concentrated contemplation. But we do not know how this great idea first took root. Let us, however, try and trace it to its source as nearly as we can.

With still greater emphasis than Chrysostom, who asserted that "the true Shekinah is man," Carlyle says: "the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself 'I,' is a breath of heaven; the highest Being reveals Himself in man." An idea such as this would never have occurred to Mohammed. The fatherhood of God in its accepted human sense was repugnant to him. The mere thought was sacrilege!

His conception of God was much too exalted, much too divine for this. God and humanity could have no possible connexion. God was the Creator—the Potter, who out of the clay

or matter in chaos had made the world and all therein. Humanity was but a small part only of His creation. Men were but as clay in His hands—mere creatures of His. Beyond this hard and fast line there could be no relationship between God and man. Association was as impossible as comparison was objectionable. God, as supreme Creator and Director of the universe, was a Being altogether distinct and apart from His own creation. Yet as such He was the soul or spirit of it, the breath of life to all that lived, and of death to all that died. Man was as evil, as puny, and as weak as God was great and good and strong. God was too exalted and glorious for words. Incomprehensible and inscrutable, He was beyond the power of language, outside the narrow limitations of thought to imagine. Just as the heavens were divided from the earth by boundless space, so far apart was God from man. The endless immensity of everything was insufficient to express His omnipotence—fell far short of the unthinkable reality. Even the heavens and earth as His handiwork did not convey as completely as it might appear to do the capacity of the power that belonged to Him. To Mohammed, in every vibrating star an all-seeing eye and glory of the great Creator, God, was visible; in every tiny blade of grass, in every spring of water, He was manifest and tangible. So

some eleven centuries after Mohammed was laid to rest, a poor, struggling, but undaunted artist-poet, looking from his mean London garret with the eyes of a dreamer-mystic into the great invisible above and beyond him (just as Amin the faithful one had done), yearned :

> "To see the world in a grain of sand,
> And a heaven in a wild flower ;
> Hold Infinity in the palm of "his" hand,
> And eternity in an hour."

And in the middle of the late departed century—which rushed across the great void of Time like a hissing meteor—thus Tennyson :

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower ; but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

While to Wordsworth, with a faith in Nature and Nature's God as deep as Mohammed, the meanest flower that blows, gave thoughts that often lay too deep for words.

Society is only too apt to judge or condemn facts and men ; also to ridicule the age and its spirit. This drastic method saves the trouble of comprehending them. The society of keen Arab traders and wily Bedouins which en-

vironed Mohammed did not comprehend him. To them he was not so much like a fish out of water, as a land quadruped at sea, altogether out of his element as well as out of his depth—a flotsam struggling to get to dry land as a jetsam.

Immeasurably above and beyond his social contemporaries either morally or spiritually, to them Mohammed was an enigma and a mystery. "Scenting a mystery is like the first bite at a piece of scandal, and holy souls do not detest it. In the secret compartments of bigotry there is some curiosity for scandal." But among Mohammed's opponents—the Koreish more particularly—it was not merely scandal that moved them: it was jealousy, envy, malice, and in the end sheer diabolical hatred. In describing the state of a mind that is advancing, we must remember that all progress is not made in one march or even series of marches. Mohammed's march was entirely uphill, dead against the collar, the whole way and all the time, except, perhaps, just towards the end. Yet each day's march brought him nearer to the goal of his desires. Slowly but surely he made progress, and with it reputation. The slowness of his movement, his advance, made progress and reputation all the more not a dead, but a living certainty. But there is always anarchy in reputation. It was this reputation—this individuality

that dared to insolently assert itself in the overthrow of their ancestral gods—which explained Koreish hostility.

Mohammed was a calm, yet by no means an unprogressive agent of Providence. Brains that are absorbed either in mania or wisdom, or, as often happens, in both at once, are permeated very very slowly by the things of this world. But even admitting that there was melancholia, there was no mania about Mohammed. If ever a man was sane and healthy, he was. "You grant a devout man, you grant a wise man: no man has a seeing eye without first having had a seeing heart." This fits his case to a nicety. A more devout man than Mohammed never lived. He was as pre-eminently wise as he was devout. He utilized his wisdom to the fullest extent of his capacity, and he proved his devoutness by putting his beliefs to the infallible test of stern and rigid practice. A trader to his finger tips, a clear-sighted man of business, and a statesman with prophetic instincts, who profited by the past, utilized the present, and prepared for the future, in this sense he was a contradiction. The being absorbed in wisdom did not prevent him from carrying on his worldly duties in the most conscientious and thorough manner. *Per contra,* his worldly duties did not prevent him from philosophical absorption. The one was his duty, the other

the breath of life to him. His veneration of God gradually crystallized the religion in him into a creed. This is generally the result of concentration. His absorption of God ended in God's absorption of him. It was a long and gradual process which occupied twenty years. During this period of embryonic development he withdrew, as it were, into himself. Then when the crisis arrived, it came out of him, as a river flows out of a spring, and was called Islam. "Our chimeras," says Victor Hugo, "are the things which most resemble ourselves, and each man dreams of the unknown, and the impossible according to his nature." Mohammed's chimera, as we know, was God and Arabian unity. But there was nothing chimerical about the former, and with this invincible lever, the latter too was a distinct probability. For although he was doubtless superstitious—that is natural—and wrestled with shadows and visions, Mohammed dealt in realities. To him God was the most real thing, the sternest reality of all in the universe. God, in fact, was the Universe. These, which to another would have been the unknown and the impossible, were to him the possible and the inevitable. The nature that was in him was the nature of God and the universe. There is a point where profundity is oblivion, when light becomes extinguished. Though from a literary aspect

Mohammed was not profound, in a religious sense his profundity, centring as it did in God, burst forth into the Cimmerian darkness which enveloped his country with the brilliancy of a meteor that illumines the blackest night.

There is too a way of encountering error by going all the way to meet the truth, also by a sort of violent good faith which accepts everything unconditionally. There was nothing violent (certainly not for a long period), but there was everything that stands for goodness and stability in Mohammed's faith. It was thus—in the spirit of a hero and the valour of a Paladin—he encountered the error and opposition of his enemies by first of all going out of his way to meet the truth; then, in spite of themselves and their hostility, by enforcing it upon those who would not be persuaded. According to Fontenelle, "there is only truth that persuades, and even without requiring to appear with all its proofs. It makes its way so naturally into the mind, that when it is heard for the first time, it seems as if one were only remembering." This was very much the case with Mohammed. This was why he tried at first to lead and not to drive his countrymen to the truth. To him who saw the truth of God's existence, His mercy written as plainly in the falling raindrop as His power of retribution is in the lightning that flashes across the sky as if it

would rend it, their stubbornness in rejecting God was utterly incomprehensible. His mind had two attitudes. The one was turned to God, the other to man. In contemplating God, he but studied man's interests and his own. But contemplation with Mohammed did not end by becoming a form of indolence. Imaginative—visionary, in fact—as he was, he did not allow his imagination to play tricks with him. He did not fancy that he wanted for nothing. Even when married to Khadija, and in tolerable affluence, there was obviously a great void in his life. This want of course was spiritual. Exact and punctilious as he was in his temporal duties, his whole bent and inclination was towards the former. As a younger and poorer man, he had looked so much at the humanity around him that he saw right down into its very soul. With the same fervent intensity he had looked into nature until he saw or rather felt the creator and controller thereof. "There are times when the unknown reveals itself in a mysterious way to the spirit of man. A sudden rent in the veil of darkness will make manifest things hitherto unseen, and then close again upon the mysteries within. Such visions have occasionally the power to effect a transfiguration in those whom they visit. They convert a poor camel-driver into a Mahomet; a peasant girl tending her goats into a Joan.

of Arc." A conscientious and faithful worker, Mohammed was at the same time a dreamer. But his dreams were but the reflex of his work and of his ideas. These came to him like mountainous waves, or the swell of an angry surf as it thunders on the beach with a threatening roar, a mass of water that would submerge the very earth. His ideas did not, however, submerge him. Nor did they destroy or bury him. Out of their unknown and bosky depths Mohammed invariably rose to the surface with the buoyancy of a life-belt, calm and unmoved, for his spiritual centre of gravity always held him up. He dreamt of man, but chiefly of God—of God's goodness and greatness, of man's impotence and frailty. He looked at the solid earth on which he stood, with its stones and its sand, its wheat and its tares, its joys and sorrows, but particularly its suffering children and helpless women. Then he looked at the vast void above, with its star-spangled sky, its sun and moon, and the God that made all and was in all. This led him to think of the void that was in himself, and to compare the one with the other. Then he pondered and compared. The greatness of it all passed into him and he dreamt again. There was no void above, for God filled it. So too his own emptiness gave place to the Supreme. All at once a great feeling of tenderness was aroused within him. From

the egotism of the *genus vir*, he passed to the contemplation of the *genus homo*, the man who contemplates and feels. God had touched his heart. In forgetfulness of self was born a great compassion for all. For years and years Mohammed lived with his neck in a noose of obstacles composed of human thorns and millstones. He was, so to speak, an outcast, thrown on the dung heap, and into the brambles; at times even in the mud. Yet no mud clung to him, not even to his feet. His head at all events was always in the light, his hand always resting on the omnipotence of the Almighty. Invariably gentle, attentive, serious, benevolent, easily satisfied, he remained serene and peaceful. It was only in the last extremity, when all his persuasive earnestness failed him, that his enemies stirred him to wrath. But it was a just and dispassionate wrath; it was the wrath of God. For whether they liked or no, Mohammed in his dual capacity as God's agent and Arabian patriot had made up his mind that they should have God. On this point he was inexorable. Feeling that there is an eternity in justice, he felt that in justice to God, and to themselves, and in spite of themselves, it was his duty to proclaim the truth. Many a less tenaciously sincere man, many a real hero, would have shrunk from and have succumbed before an ordeal so terrific, a con-

test so supremely Titanic. But Mohammed was made of sterner stuff, of the spirit that gods are made of. Failure was a word that he did not recognize. With God at his back, success was an absolute certainty—a foregone conclusion.

Whatever might be his desire to remain where he was and cling to it, he was impelled to advance, to continue, to go on further and still further. Yet to think and to ask himself where it was all going to lead him to ? But although he thought, he never hesitated, never turned back. His hand was to the plough—the plough God. God was the goal, the end, the summit of human existence and ambition. Humanity was the soil, and to get there he must furrow his way through its enmities and affections. Firm and exceptional natures are thus moulded out of miseries, misfortunes and afflictions. As a result of his work history shows us more and more that Mohammed was firm and exceptional to the very highest degree. Yet there was nothing of that hypocrisy which Victor Hugo calls supreme cynicism about him. He was too human, too much in earnest, to be anything but Amin the Faithful. There is, after all, more in a name than meets the eye. In some names there is history and the tragedy of history. In others there is the might and majesty of a commanding magnetism,

which recognizes the sublimity of truth. In Mohammed's case, even to this day over two hundred and fifty million human beings bow the knee through him to God. Yes, there is much—a world of meaning—that is inexpressible in a name—a magic and a *je ne sais quoi* which under the label of Napoleon led men to the Kingdom Come of glory—in other words, to destruction and the devil—but that with Mohammed was the open sesame to the glory and power of God. A rose by any other name may smell as sweet. But Islam without the halo of time-honoured sanctity that attaches to the name of Mohammed, would sound as but a hollow brass or a tinkling cymbal. Just, in fact, as the man himself was sincere and faithful, there is, and there will continue to be, a magic in his name—more so even than that of Christ has for the Christian—drawing men to God, as he in person drew them not alone by sheer force of will and character, but by a force which was even stronger, the force of sincerity and truth.

CHAPTER III

THE ENVIRONMENT THAT MOULDED MOHAMMEL

A TRUE son of the desert, it is impossible to understand the powerful and complex personality of Mohammed, unless we can appreciate the peculiar character and genius of the desert. More so in some ways even than the seaman, the dweller or sojourner in the desert is distinct and unique in himself. Possessing the courage of the Fatalist, and as free as the roving winds of heaven, he is all the same of a shrinking and timorous nature, confronted as he often is by certain aspects and phenomena that imperil his life and strike down to the very roots of his moral consciousness.

In the desert there is, comparatively speaking, little life. Unlike the forest region, it is naked and almost destitute. There, as at sea, man is face to face not only with the great elements, but with the greater Infinite and Invisible. He is nearer to God and the immensity of Nature. There is nothing—or little at least—to distract his attention—nothing between him and the ever watchful Inscrutable. There is no shade from the sun

by day, no protection from the moon and stars at night. They look down on him as from the pinnacle of the sublimest elevation. The fiercer glory of the sun by day burns into his very soul, consumes his very marrow. The milder effulgence of the moon by night throws its silvery glamour over all his senses. The lesser and more distant splendour of the stars—those watch-fires of angelic spirits—in their countless myriads awe and bewilder him. In the choking breath of the simoom he feels the potentialities of God, and his own helpless impotence. Struck all of a heap by its stifling blast, he is filled with fear and trembling in the presence of a Power invisible yet tangible and deadly. Whether he wills or not, the fear of God—of the Inexorable and Inevitable—enters into his heart and takes possession of his inmost soul. Call it the fear of God or not, it is practically one and the same feature—the mere human label makes no difference to this awful and unseen reality—the same fear of the Unknown, the Unexpected and the Inevitable: the Inevitable that is always with us, the agnostic and the sophist no less than with the theologian, yet unseen, incomprehensible and omnipotent. But more than anything, it is the awful and impenetrable silence that impresses and appals the silent and dignified nomad of the desert.

To those who have never been outside the confines of civilization, it is not logically possible even to guess at the extraordinary influence—a fascination amounting to witchery—that the silence and solitude of the desert exercises over one. Yet if I were asked to define the essence and subtlety of this influence, I could but answer that it is indefinable; all the same a glamour that, like the force of gravity, is irresistible. Free and open like the sea (but fresh only at night), it is not the witchery of the soft blue sky, for the sky of the desert is hard and steely; it is not the fierce white heat of the fervid sun that melts into the very marrow of one's bones; but rather is it the soothing magic of the moon at night, under the brilliant canopy of the heavens, when the earth, cooling rapidly, is lulled into eternal silence, that one falls under the magic spell of its wondrous influence. But even the glamour of the moon is outglamoured by the darkness of the night under whose funereal pall even the great suns and planets hide their diminished heads. There is in the darkness and the silence of the night a mystery and a profundity that arouses the sluggish, even the stagnant consciousness of the dullard—that much more so attracts the quickening soul of the mystic and visionary, which springs to it with the same eager avidity that a lean and hungry trout leaps

at the first fly which he sees after a long and enforced abstinence. It is in this darkness and silence of the night, rather than in the fierce glare of the midday sun, that the fear of the great Infinite comes to man. For if we but think of it, what a spectre-teeming spectacle is night. We hear strange, weird sounds. We know not whence they come or whither they go. Or it may be that all around us is as the silence of the grave—of eternal death. We see the evening star looming large like a great world on fire. The blue of the sky looms black. The stars seem to speak to us; the whole scene is impressive—a sight for the gods. In the desert, however, and to the earnest thinker whose centre of gravity is God, night is something more than a mere spectacle—a something greater, grander and more terrifying than a simple impression—a feeling deeper and sublimer even than a conviction: a revelation of the Unseen Unknown which is all the time behind that which he sees and knows.

Full as night is of phantoms, shades, sounds and silence, it is no illusive mirage, no mere empty simulacrum. But in every way it is a reality and a substance which is tangible, that touches one not only on the spot, on the raw, but everywhere; that fills one with vague fears, and brings even the proudest and the sternest to their knees before the

power of the great Omnipotence. The very stars which hang out in the great firmament appear as God's sign-posts—great all-seeing eyes that are ever upon us—or like eternal watch-fires which contrast the eternity of God with the momentary mortality of man; they enhance the blackness of the blue. Peering as they do into the awesome watcher's inmost soul, they either drive him headlong into the blackness and terrors of evil, or lead him by their kindly light into the glory of the Almighty Presence. Unquestionably the night is either diabolical or sacred. Not only this, she is the brooder and breeder of all primitive doctrines, the conceiver and the mother of all human creeds. In her immense womb there is a latent light, a smouldering volcano full of ashes, cinders, and dead men's bones; yet full also of fire-sparks that are capable of flashing into luminosity, even of bursting into hissing, leaping and devouring flames. It was thus that Christianity and Islam came into being. It was thus out of the primeval sacrifices, the shadows and silence of death and darkness, that all creeds have crept into and out of the minds of men. Tortuous human ant-heaps bored and tunnelled through and through by human ideas, human hopes, and human aspirations; worlds in the low-lying limbo of the fœtus stage, fecundating in all directions into beliefs, faiths, creeds,

sects, denominations, quackeries, dissimulations and charlatanism. Labyrinthine, subterranean, and full of subtleties as all these creeds appear to be, they are easy enough to comprehend. They have all sprung from the same simple seed if we would but recognize it. If we but looked at this vista of the past as through a mental telescope, if we but grasped the substance and not the shadow, went straight to the simple root instead of to the theological and metaphysical subtleties of it all, we would find it absolutely simple. If we would but for a moment drop from our eyes the dense scales of dogma, bigotry and prejudice, there would be no difficulty in tracing back all these enigmatic ramifications and gloomy obscurities of pristine darkness and chaos to the one central germ idea, the one vitalizing spark that inspires and illumines them all.

It is obvious that Wordsworth, when he speaks of only "two voices," the one "of the sea," the other "of the mountains"—"each a mighty voice, ~~quite~~ overlooked the bleakness and silence of the desert. This overpowering blackness that prevades the very soul, creeps through every vent into the bones and chills one to the very marrow. This sublime silence, that speaks to one as the still small voice of God spoke to Moses, and that fills the thinker with even greater

awe and veneration than the crashing and rolling thunder. This silence which is of eternity, therefore golden, while speech is of to-day and only silvern, for as Carlyle reminds us: "After speech has done its best, silence has to include all that speech has forgotten or cannot express."

Speaking for myself, who have passed many days of my existence at sea, and many more still in the desert, there is that in the latter which always reminds me of the former. To be sure, the ever restless sea with its almost myriad moods—its calm, its motion, its rippling smiles, its wavy undulations, its heights and depths, its fickleness and treachery, its dazzling beauties, its fierce turbulence—is as unlike the desert, with its grim stiff grandeur and appaling sameness as it well could be: still

> "Tho' inland far we be,
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us thither."

There is no music in it by day or by night, only the dead still hush of silence. Yet the desert has its aspects, if it has not its moods and contrasts—as singular as they are striking. See, or rather feel it under the fierce and scorching glare of the fiery sun, that almost shrivels you into a mummy; see it also under the softer spell of the silvery orb,

when the air is balmy, if not fresh, and you will at once imagine yourself to be in an altogether different and enchanted world. Then again, lose yourself in the desert on a dark night when for once in a way the stars are dim or obscured by clouds, and you will realize as you never before have done, the awesome reality of the sense of loneliness—a feeling which can only be compared to that felt by the hunted criminal hiding in a city, and against whom every man's hand is raised.

But there is besides in the desert the fateful mirage that, like the ocean sirens, has lured so many to their doom. Finally there is the oasis which stands out of the sea of shimmering sand, like an island paradise that towers over the waste of seething waters which encircle it. The desert too, like the sea, has its ships and its men. Ships that pass by day as well as by night. Ships that stride across the great sandy wastes, grunting and gawky, with unwearying patience, unyielding tenacity, and unerring instinct. As are the ships, so are the men. But in place of gawkiness and grunts, the golden virtue of silence, and the conscious pride of natural dignity. Men who in their very port and carriage are the very spirit and personification of the desert. Men who represent not the genii, but the genius of the great dry sea

of sand and silence. Indeed, if ever men on this planet of ours were patriarchal, if ever men bore themselves with the gait and the simple dignity of free men, the Bedawins of Arabia and the North African deserts do. With the lynx-like, yet enigmatic expression that calls to mind a combination of eagle keenness and owl-like solemnity, there is about them a freedom of manner and bearing, a dignity of carriage, an independence of character, that are the peculiarly glorious and distinctive heirlooms of the air, expanse and grandeur of these inland seas. In every sense, moral and physical, they are the products of an unrestricted environment that has made them what they are—wanderers on the face of the earth. But wanderers from choice. Untrammelled even to licence; giving an unbridled rein to their spirit of independence. Regarding with supreme contempt the luxuries and even necessaries of civilization. Yet with it all slaves to the spiritual fears that haunt them. Relics of a primitive and old-world civilization, there is about these Bedawins a flavour of antiquity, of a past that is hoary with the hoariness of eternal age, so distant that we cannot conjecture about it, even in the vaguest of terms. In addition to this everlasting antiquity and conservatism, there is about these patriarchs a naturally dignified reticence, and an air of

calm, quiet assurance and authority, that are peculiarly their own personal property. But there is even more than this. There is that same universal concept—common to all primitive people who have not outlived it—of belief in the fear of a supreme power. That same awe and reverence for the patriarchal authority connected with that of the ancestors which has preceded it; that calm and philosophical acceptation of Karma or Fatalism; that same dread of consequences; that identical terror of malignant demons; that same shrinking from the inevitable, which is the heritage of all natural people. Inherent instincts that even twelve centuries of Islam have scarcely modified. When we get underneath the surface of human nature as represented by the Arab, whether he came from the east, the west, the south, or the centre, it is obvious that the underlying motive for most, if not all, of his social customs is inspired by that personal or religious instinct which is so closely allied to the primary instincts of all. Out of such fundamental material did Mohammed emerge!

Nevertheless, with all its drawbacks, there is about the desert, only in a different degree, the pleasure of the pathless woods, the rapture of the lonely shore. Just as by the deep and rolling sea whose very roar is music, there

is a society where none intrudes, so with the desert. Right in the very core and centre of its silence and solitude, the man whose ears and eyes are open to receive impressions, finds himself in the presence of that invisible but omniscient power of Nature. The power that, while it causes the earnest thinker to pause and reflect, makes the average human being yearn for the companionship of his own kind. But it was not so with Mohammed. Mohammed was not as other men are. He was a thought leader. Not a deep thinker by any means; but profoundly in earnest. Few men in the world's history—judging at least by results—have been more in earnest than he was. In Hannibal there is the same earnest fixity of purpose, only different in kind, the same unquenchable ardour, and the same iron will that kept him faithful to the sacred vow of undying vengeance against the Romans, that his father exacted from him on the altar of their ancestral gods. In William the Silent too, but also in another direction, we find the same relentless purpose and the same inflexible sincerity to attain the independence and autonomy of the United Provinces. Cromwell likewise gave his life and his services—all that was best in him in fact—in the firm and sincere conviction that he was God's chosen instrument. But in none of these men, not even in the great and heroic Ironside, was

there the same fervent godliness, i.e. the fear and veneration of God. It was Luther most of all who approached Mohammed in the sincerity of his purpose, i.e. of his religion. For although Luther was essentially a priest, and did not found a new creed, his sincerity showed itself as a Protestant and Reformer. In his whole life the fear and veneration of God as the motive factor of his existence was manifest.

It is, of course, just possible, as Tennyson surmises, that:

"... Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process
of the suns."

This, however, is vague and brings us no nearer to an exact comprehension of the matter. The better to understand this feeling of fear that so dominated men of the Numa, Buddha, Luther, John Knox, Cromwell and Mohammed type, it is essential that the student grasps and measures the actual measure of difference that divides religion from creed. It is but meet that we should accept the rational axiom, that religion is natural, and creed the egotistical and personal interpretation placed upon religion by human beings. As Draper says: "When natural causes suffice, it is needless to look for supernatural." So Bacon, looking with the insight of true genius into the Book of Na-

ture, up to Nature's God, said in that immortal aphorism which opens the *Novum Organum*, "Homo Naturæ minister et interpres"—man is the servant and interpreter of Nature. This will make it easier to get at the root of this dual feeling of fear and veneration. But to do so it is necessary for the student to look as far back into the past as he can. In every ancient cult that has ever existed, in the Chaldæan, the Egyptian, the Aryan, the various (so-called Pagan) African, for example, the same overmastering element predominates. In Grecian annals and literature—in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, in the great tragedies of Æschylus, in Plutarch and other writers—Fear is not merely reverenced as "*Holy*," but in Greece, as elsewhere, altars were erected and worship offered to her as a goddess.

It is in its definition and conception of religion that humanity has gone astray. By general acceptation religion and creed have always been confounded. Natural religion is spoken of as a something different and widely apart from Christianity, as a religion revealed. This is not so. There is no difference between them. Christianity is but the development of natural religion on the lines and ideas of certain individuals. There is no such thing as revelation. Religion is an evolution. It is natural. It comes to

us from Nature, i.e. from the God out of which Nature has evolved. Hence its constructive and destructive dualism. It is a living and vital force that is innate in man as being one with Nature. Obviously this veneration, this fear of the Unseen, the Unexpected and the Inevitable (which I have spoken of), is one of the root instincts out of which it unfolds itself. Most unquestionably it is the outward and visible expression of the inner consciousness or spirit that moves man to the adoration of veneration in the constructive direction, and of fear in the destructive. This varies in the individual. Thus on the one hand we have a Mohammed; on the other a Napoleon. From the very beginning of human existence right down until now this fear of God has predominated. It still exists. It will go on existing. Religion is as much a part of the human constitution as the primal instincts. Creed is acquired. It is environment and education that makes or forms creed. The child becomes what his teacher makes him, as he can neither distinguish, discriminate nor judge for himself. But to make him Jew, Gentile or Christian, the religion must be in him. Creed, in a word, is but the view that is taken of natural religion by the ego. But a matter so important as this, however, cannot here be entered into.

As it has been with all the great religious leaders of history, so too it was with Mohammed.

Fearing, yet venerating, the might, the majesty and the goodness of God, the companionship that he most wanted was not human but divine. Communion with Him, through his own thought and through the great Infinity around him, was what his heart most desired. A town Arab by birth and breeding, a Bedawin by feeling and instinct, he was something more than a mere native of Arabia. Rather a son of men, an apostle chosen out specially from among men, that he might bear to them the message and truth of God.

"Men," says Victor Hugo, "talk to themselves, speak to themselves, but the external silence is not interrupted. There is a grand tumult; everything speaks within us, excepting the mouth. The realities of the soul, for all they are not visible and palpable, are not the less realities." The great reality, as I have shown, that obsessed Mohammed was God. Though invisible in person or even in spirit, God was none the less visible and palpable to him as much in the finest speck of sand as in the consuming glory of the sun. In the mocking spectres of the night, as well as in the shifting shadows of the morning, the might and majesty of Allah was supreme. In the dead silence of human solitude, the grand tumult within him was only grand and tumultuous because God talked to him and he to God in the suppressed sibilance of hushed and awesome

whisperings. "Diamonds are only found in the darkness of the earth; truths are only found in the depths of the thought. As it seemed to Father Madeline, the ex-convict Jean Valjean, so it appeared to Mohammed, "that after descending into these depths, after groping for some time in the densest of this darkness, he had found one of these diamonds, one of these truths, which he held in his hand, and which dazzled his eyes when he looked at it." The brilliant which Mohammed searched for was the truth—the greatest brilliant of all! The truth that he found as it appeared to him was God. Thus he immolated his whole being to the will of God, as to the truth which resides in Him alone. Like Pascal, Mohammed believed that "one can be quite sure that there is a God without knowing what He is." Or in the words of Hobbes: "Forasmuch as God Almighty is incomprehensible, it follows that we can have no conception or image of the Deity, except only this, that *there is a God*." This in sense if not in word was Mohammed's idea of God as he tried to conceive Him. For him it was sufficient that God was the only God—the Creator and the Controller of the universe! "There are touching illusions which are perhaps sublime realities." But to Mohammed, God was not even "the Great Illusion," but a stern as well as a sublime reality! To him the desert and

lone places were God's dwelling-place—as far away from the busy hum and haunts of men as He could get. But only because of the delightful charm of golden silence and solitude—only because in the midst thereof, as in the heavenly paradise, God dwelt there. The one fair spirit that he dwelt and communed with—not in close proximity however, but with a great gulf fixed between—was the one and only God, who had at last constituted him His minister and apostle, because of his great lôve and devotion to Him. It was for this that Mohammed sought the desert. It was there under the stars—the flashing forget-me-nots of God's great power—that alone with Nature and his own thoughts, he sought God. Who is there of us can say that he did or did not find Him? Can we, or can we not, by searching find God? Whether we can or no, however, is not the question—is not for us to decide! But one fact is certain—one fact is obvious. It was in the core and centre of the eternal silence and solitude of mountain fastnesses and desert expanses that the spirit of Islam had its origin. It was there, as it were under the myriad eyes of the great and infinite God, under the fiery blaze of the burning sun, under the cooler and more clinging glamour of the mellow moon, under the dimmer gloom and mystery of darkness, there with his face to the red-hot furnace blasts and

suffocation of the simoom, that the message came to him. Alone with his thoughts:

> "Alone, alone, all all alone,
> Alone on a wide wide sea!"

No mere saint, but God Himself, "took pity on" his "soul in agony." He was not alone, for God was with him. This self-communion of Mohammed with his thoughts, was to him none other than communion with God, because his thoughts were concentrated on Him with all the soul and strength he was humanly capable of.

The power of persuasion does not always lie in the flow and eloquence of speech. The strongest are often the most silent. God never speaks but in the still small voice of consciousness, that comes to every man in the dark watches of the night, when the hum and movement of life is hushed into the silence of sleep!

Solitude, too, that twin-sister of Silence, "though," as De Quincey says, "it may be silent as light, is, like light, the mightiest of agencies; for solitude is essential to man." But if essential to the ordinary man, it is as the breath of life to men of God and prophets. Solitude, in fact, sinks deep into a pure and simple nature, and changes him in a great measure. Unconsciously it intensifies him

to a superlative degree, and inspires him with an awe of itself that becomes sacred to him. Within himself the recluse feels weak, unstable and inconsistent. Without he is strong in the consciousness of the omnipotence and supremacy of the Infinite. "Solitude generates a certain amount of sublime exaltation. It is like the smoke arising from the burning bush. A mysterious lucidity of mind results, which converts the student into the seer, and the poet into a prophet." In a word, there is an enthusiasm, an influence, and a power in solitude that the civilized man, or the man who has never been subjected to it, cannot form the slightest or faintest conception of. For the silence of solitude and the solitude of silence is a state (common to all primitive people) in which the being believes himself to be not only "πλήρης θεοῦ," i.e. full of God, but that the God predominates. Hence the enthusiasm, the rapture, and the power to divine and speak in divers tongues.

Surely, if ever man was in deadly earnest, this faithful son of Arabia was. If ever man opened his heart and soul to the Father and Mother of all things, this Mohammed, the merchant, did. Truly if ever the great Author of our being responded to a soul in silent agony, i.e. in conflict, in a struggle for victory, it was to this great descendant of the bond-

woman Hagar! For in Islam, and the soul of Islam, such as he inculcated, the victory was greater than any Marathon or Thermopylæ.

CHAPTER IV

MOHAMMED'S PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS

MOHAMMED, as I have more than once said; was all for unity and cohesion, therefore against division and disintegration of any kind. Concentration was as the breath of life to him. Dissension a deadly evil. In his scheme of religion and politics there was no place for schism. Schism meant discord, and discord the devil. To him discord was as Ate, the mother of dissension. He recognized, as Spenser evidently did, that "discord harder is to end than to begin":

> "For all her studie was, and all her thought,
> How she might overthrow the things that concord
> wrought."

And above all things, this Statesman Prophet was the essence and personification of centralization and concord. For unity alone rendered Islam feasible. Thus in the second Surah he insists that mankind was of one faith from the beginning. Thus too as a just, faithful and consistent man, he is opposed to violence and taking the offensive, even in the name and under the cloak of

religion; he constantly advocates and authorizes (that is, has God's authority for) the defensive. He even recommends, at the same time that he excuses, war and retaliation on the unbeliever and infidel. On the whole, however, I am bound to admit that Mohammed disapproves of and discountenances violence in religion. He, in fact, distinctly forbids his followers from enforcing it. Their own persecution was to be met by patience. Apostates and unbelievers were to be given time meet for repentance. Yet to him, fanatic as he was with regard to religion, Islam was the only true Faith, the covenant, the sure ark of God that alone could secure salvation. Of this and of God he was no more than an Apostle—i.e. a messenger; also an expounder—but as such he obviously tried to live up to his name of Faithful. This speaks volumes for his toleration and humanity in an age when neither one nor the other of these attributes were much in repute, when both, in fact, were at a low ebb. Yet it shows us how intensely human the Prophet was. A man of great patience, prudence and trustworthiness, of retentive memory, strong character, and with the disposition of a judge—a very commander of men. Thus he acknowledges the divinity of God in forgiving, and the humanity of man in demanding reparation and resti-

tution. Here the moral excellence of Mohammed shines out as a brilliant. In Surah xiv., "a grievous punishment is *prepared* for the unjust. But they who shall have believed and wrought righteousness, shall be introduced into gardens, wherein rivers flow; they shall remain therein *for ever* by the permission of their Lord, and their salutation therein *shall be* Peace." From this and many other similar passages, it would seem that Mohammed, by his constant reiteration of *Promises* and *Threats*, by his determined insistence thereon, hoped ultimately to convince even his enemies of his sincerity also of the fact that Islam, as the creed of the one and only God, was the true Faith. Again in this passage (Surah vi.), "God causeth the grain and the date-stone to put forth, He bringeth forth the living from the dead, and He bringeth forth the dead from the living. This is God," etc., etc.; we get a clear insight into the intensity and comprehensiveness of the divine conception as it appeared to him. A little further on in the same passage he speaks of God as "He who hath produced you from one soul; and hath provided for you a sure receptacle and a repository," namely in the loins of your fathers, and the womb of your mothers—one of those gleams of pantheism that I have already alluded to.

But of all the passages in the Koran, the

following is, in many ways, one of the most significant: "Whatever good befalleth thee, O man, it is from God; and whatever evil befalleth thee, it is from thyself." It is obvious from this that the prophet believed evil to be a human weakness with man as an active and self-willed agent. Sale in a note thereon says: "These words are not to be understood as contradicting the preceding verse, that all is from God, since the evil that befalls mankind, though ordered by God, is yet the consequence of their own wicked actions." But as Mohammed regarded the sublime divinity of God, it would be more accurate to interpret the *evil* not as being ordained or even sanctioned by God, but as being permitted, or rather not prevented by Him as a thing inevitable. To him the purity, sanctity and inviolability of God was of such vast moment, that it was unjust—a mortal sin—to devise even a lie against Him. "And who is more unjust than he who deviseth a lie against God, that he may seduce men without understanding?" The frequent repetition of this and other like passages is significant of Mohammed's sincerity, also of his moral persistence and tenacity. It was from his point of view bad enough to have doubt thrown on the authenticity of his mission. This he could to some extent put up with. But it was as naught compared

to the reflection, the crime of perjury committed against the Almighty. To cast a slur on His holiness in this audacious way, was nothing short of blasphemy, a crime worthy of eternal hell fire and damnation. Few men in the world's history were as loyal to their God as this grim but faithful product of Arabia the Stony. In this respect, and particularly with regard to the depth and intensity of their religious zeal and fervour, there was a strong resemblance between Cromwell and Mohammed. To both of these moral ironsides, those who did not believe as they believed were unbelievers, and as such outside the pale of God's mercy. For believers, however, nothing was too good. To such an extent did these principles influence the latter, that he even went so far as to promise that all grudges should be removed from the minds of the faithful. Here again we have evidence of Mohammed's unquestionable humanity; also of civilization to a marked degree. For a grudge, although fundamentally and characteristically human, was at the same time, and still is among the Bedawins, a peculiarly Arabian idiosyncrasy; associated as it was, and often culminating as it did, in acts of vengeance identical to the Corsican vendetta, "the terrible blood feud which even the most reckless fear for their posterity."

In spite, however, of his eagerness and zeal for conversion, consistent as this was with his idea of national autonomy, in nothing did Mohammed show his sincerity so much as in his thoroughness and honesty. He was nothing if not thorough. The long and arduous probation he passed through in preparing and fitting himself for his mission —the mental concentration, the wrestlings with all that is evil and inexorable in man's nature, the night watches, the agonies, the communings with God—all go to prove this. And if to be outspoken and candid is honesty, then indeed no one has surpassed him in that respect. In his eyes a true disciple of Islam meant a man who lived and acted up to the tenets and principles of its faith. For instance, with him there was no such fiasco as a death-bed repentance. "But no repentance *shall be accepted* from those who do evil until *the time* when death presenteth itself unto one of them, *and he* saith verily I repent now; nor unto those who die unbelievers: for them have we prepared a grievous punishment." Such an act was wholly repugnant to the fine sense of equity and justice that he possessed, advocating as he so strenuously did the use of "a full measure and just balance." As one who had given practically his whole life to the service and adoration of God, his soul rose in revolt and abhorred so vile

a subterfuge. It was adding insult to injury. A mere sneaking stratagem of priestly artifice, held out as an alluring but offensive bait. A despicable and devilish cunning on the part of the unbeliever, who would endeavour to throw dust into the sun-piercing vision of the Most High, all unconscious of the thinness and transparency of his device and of God's searching penetration, that could pierce through all eternity even unto the uttermost ends of His mighty universe! To serve mammon a lifetime, and then at the last moment, when on the brink of death's unending precipice, to turn to God and expect to reap the same reward of eternal bliss as the whole-hearted believer who has given all or a great part of his life to God's service, was impossible. The very thought of it was monstrous. The choice lay with the ego himself! Evil was his own doing! Good also lay within his reach. It was in a great measure a matter of choice. Every man was more or less responsible for his own undoing. To a life of evil, a death-bed repentance was not capable of producing more than its own equivalent of happiness, i.e. the merest possible fragment. This was in accordance with God's principle of the scales of justice and an even balance. Yet Mohammed was not against repentance and contrition when sincere and made in due and proper time. Over and

over again he holds out the olive branch, and reiterates the forgiveness and mercy of God, as attributes that belonged to Him alone. Mercy, indeed, was not so much an *attribute* as a *monopoly*. "He hath prescribed unto Himself mercy," as compatible with the fact that He was the final Court of Appeal. However adversely the theologian may criticize this from the modern Christian standpoint, it is clear and direct proof of Mohammed's whole-hearted sincerity. Further it is equally direct and tangible evidence of the ardour and zeal that was in him as a prophet and reformer.

God, with all His sternness and inflexibility, as He appeared to Mohammed, was just and merciful. A strict comparison between Yahveh and Allah certainly inclines the balance in favour of the latter. Jehovah at His best was a God of blood and vengeance, at His worst a voracious monster. In Allah, stern and avenging God as He was, there was at least compassion and mercy and forgiveness. He was not inexorable. He would listen to reason. Mohammed himself was a distinct advance on the founder of the ancient Jewish faith. He was more humane, a man of broader and deeper sympathies. Stern and hard to a degree where God and the Faith was concerned; where men, but especially women and children, were concerned, he was all tenderness and pity.

Dutiful and obedient to his uncle who had been a father to him, he was a faithful servant, an exemplary husband, a kind father, a good master. The very name of Faithful, by which he was always distinguished, proves beyond a doubt what manner of man he was. An orphan himself in childhood, early inured to poverty, his heart went out to all those who had the misfortune to be similarly situated. For the poor, the weak, the helpless, he had a fellow-feeling. The degraded or at least dependent and unprotected position of women, their moral and legal helplessness most of all, appealed to him. But in no sense because he was sensual. Sensuality was not one of his many failings. A man from top to bottom, by birth, breeding and environment Mohammed was an Arab and a Patriarch. As such he only naturally liked women and children. To men and for the Faith a strong hard man, to the weak and helpless he was tender and affectionate. As he was strong, so he was merciful and full of human sympathies. His long and happy union with Khadija shows not only that he was faithful to a degree, but a man of high moral fibre. A man too full of the gravity of life to squander his substance in mere sensuality. But in all eastern and African countries where polygamy prevails, marriage is a pure matter of political convenience. Mohammed knew this. He

recognized that marriage was a very important factor in securing influence and power. It threw out octopean feelers at various tangents and established certain associations and connexions to which it clung, as a limpet to a rock or a devil-fish to its victim. The same principle down almost to our own day has been a powerful factor in European statecraft. Even the earlier practice of keeping mistresses, so much indulged in by the sovereign holders of so-called "divine rights," had much in common with this custom. It was undoubtedly this motive more than any other which influenced Mohammed. It was an essential feature in his great design. For in spite of his overwhelming devotion to God, notwithstanding God's obsession of him, Mohammed was essentially human. There was room and sorrow in his heart for human frailties. His desire was strong to remedy them. He too like Luther was a Protestant, and a Reformer.

As to the soulless theory regarding the fair sex, which has been literally thrust upon the Moslem world by an antipathetic if not inimical Christendom, I quite agree with Burton. "The Moslems never went so far." At all events if some of them have done so, "Certain '*Fathers of the Church*,' it must be remembered, did not believe that women have souls." Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in one

of that inimitable series of letters which she wrote, admits as much. In this particular letter written from Constantinople on May 29, 1717 (O.S.), to the Abbé Conti, she says: "Our vulgar notion that they (the Turks) do not own women to have any souls is a mistake." And then she continues, but in not so accurate a vein: "'Tis true, they say they are not of so elevated a kind, and therefore must not hope to be admitted into the paradise appointed for the men, who are to be entertained by celestial beauties. But there is a place of happiness destined for souls of the inferior order, where all good women are to be in eternal bliss." It is in no sense surprising, therefore, that to Mohammed Allah was the merciful. So in the sixth surah, he writes: "We (as if identifying himself with God) will not impose a task on any soul beyond its ability. For this self-same reason, God is minded to make *his religion* light unto you: for man was created weak." Strong and enduring as sincerity and conviction made him, Mohammed knew his own weakness. Hence with a clemency that was divine he made concessions such as these. In these he acknowledged that, "to err is human, to forgive divine." All the more, however, we cannot but admire his candour. Even as regards himself, his shortcomings and inadequacies, he speaks with an openness and straightforward-

ness that disarms suspicion—that forces the inquirer to respect him with all the greater reverence as a great leader of men. "So say I not unto you, the treasures of God are in my power; neither *do I say,* I know the secrets *of God* neither do I say unto you, Verily I am an angel: I follow only that which is revealed unto me." Indeed the more closely and carefully I look into his words in comparison with his life and acts, the more obvious do his candour and sincerity become. The more obvious is it to me that although essentially the product of a grim and petrified environment, he himself was unique. A man in advance of his time and people. For deep down in the soul of him, the rich milk of human kindness welled up out of the same eternal source from which he derived his fear and veneration for the Supreme! Truly the Prophet and spiritual ruler of the East and polygamy, as Christ stands for the West and monogamy!

It was with these weapons, combined with the tenacity of an elastic and imperishable patience, that Mohammed fought the Koreish and other tribes, and it was with them he finally conquered. Had he been insincere, there would have been no Islam. Had there been no spirit of a divine moral conception such as he infused into the creed (which came through him from the great fountain head of

God and Nature), Islam would have withered and perished from sheer exhaustion and debility. From the standpoint of physical and moral purity, Mohammed was in every sense an Essene. Not only therefore was cleanliness of the body an absolute essential, but cleanliness of mind. Filthy immoral actions and depravities that he knew existed, unjust violence and iniquities, whether openly done or in concealment, were condemned and forbidden in scathing terms as a violation of God's express command. The sophistry that would make an evil to be no crime unless found out, he denounced with all the fiery ardour of his fervent nature. From God there was no concealment. In his eyes it was a crime all the same—greater, in fact, because of attempted concealment.

CHAPTER V

THE MATERIAL AND OTHER SIDES OF THE PROPHET'S CHARACTER

IN refuting those sceptics who have doubted the truth and sincerity of Islam, Carlyle condemns scepticism (rather too hastily it seems to me) as an indication of spiritual paralysis. Most unquestionably he was right in denouncing the former as an idiotic and godless theory. But scepticism itself in a general sense is not necessarily an evil. On the contrary, it is a natural tendency that arises out of the instinct of curiosity. Knowledge is not an inert and passive principle, but an active and dynamic force. Buckle in his history speaks of scepticism as stimulating curiosity. But he has put the cart before the horse. It is curiosity that excites scepticism. Curiosity is an animal instinct—the basis of all science. It exists in the lower animal creation—scepticism only in the upper human section. It is a higher or further development, a tendency that is certainly strengthened, if not acquired through education.

According to Lecky, "The first stage to toleration in England was due to the spirit

of scepticism encroaching upon the doctrine of exclusive salvation" ; and "the extinction of the spirit of intolerance both in Catholic and Protestant countries—due to the spirit of rationalism—was the noblest of all the conquests of civilization." But as rationalism itself is chiefly the consequence of scepticism and the result of inquiry, it is obvious that in a deeply fundamental sense, the world is very considerably indebted to science or the spirit of scepticism. Indeed all knowledge has arisen from experience, and the desire to search into the root of things—to know what is what. Without curiosity and scepticism, human thought would have long since stagnated and the world remained sunk in ignorance. As Ghazali says, "No knowledge without assurance deserves the name of knowledge." Seeing is not always devouring. Curiosity is not necessarily gluttony, or "scepticism, that curse of the intellect," as Victor Hugo calls it. Gluttony is unnatural, unwholesome, and bestial. It is not so much overdoing, as a flagrant abuse and outrage of a natural appetite. It is a kicking against the pricks—a flying in the face of Providence. But curiosity as an instinct direct from Nature is healthy, therefore the use of it as also wholesome stands in need of stimulus and encouragement.

So Tennyson said of Shelley :

> There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."

In this righteous sense Mohammed was curious. As one of her own selection, Nature had specially endowed him with curiosity. He was one of her human, sensitive plants. As an observer, all his senses were developed and on the alert. He not only saw, but felt every vibration that thrilled, as it were, the very soul of the first great mother. In every flitting cloud, as in every fugitive thought, he was conscious of an unseen Power. A look-out man rather than a prophet, it was thus he groped or rather felt his way until he felt God. "I feel that there is a God," said La Bruyère, "and I do not feel that there is none: that is enough for me; the reasoning of the world is useless to me: I conclude that God exists." It was in much the same vein of self-argument that Mohammed communed to himself. Having felt God, God became for him a necessity: more so even, an essential—an absolutism which banished all else from his mind. The thought that there was no God did not occur to him. But the thought that other gods could exist in the same universe with the one omnipotence was to him as monstrous as it was unthinkable. Besides Him there was no room for any other. The very thought in his estimation perished from inanition and sheer inability of conception! The trinity of

Christianity was to him as impossible and unacceptable as the antediluvian or later polytheism of his own countrymen.

All active minds are sceptical. Carlyle himself—although he appears to have been unconscious of the fact—was himself a sceptic. But it was peculiarly characteristic of the antagonistic dualism of his nature on the one hand to hurl inuendoes, anathemas (and every kind of mental brickbat that he could lay hold of) at what he called scepticism or unbelief. On the other hand, to hold up belief as absolutely essential to human existence. But like all theoretical crotchets, he carried his philosophical speculations too far. In other words, he sometimes overreached himself. According to his particular dogma, in his opinion, the life of man cannot subsist on doubt or denial, it subsists only on belief. But this is altogether beside the mark. Scepticism does not necessarily imply doubt or denial. Belief itself cannot exist without it. It is out of the ashes of scepticism that the immortal Phœnix of belief arises. It is out of the doubt and denial of accepted doctrines that all creeds (including Christianity and Islam) have grown into being. The doubt engendered by scepticism is after all only an investigation or leading into, an analysis of the nature of dogmas, doctrines or creeds. It is an investigation that may or may not

have a result. It is but a search for or groping after the truth, as the consequence of moral, intellectual or spiritual dissatisfaction. It is also the desire to know, to find out the pros and cons of all the sides to a question. The spirit or element of doubt is the necessary, the essential precursor of improvement and progress. Hence the immense importance and significance of Scepticism. It is the very sum and substance of all human knowledge. As the acorn is to the oak, scepticism is to knowledge—the seed from which has sprung up all we know, and ever shall know. The ever fluent channel through which all the great intellectual giants and reformers of the world have poured out the glowing flash-lights of their intellect into the normal darkness of human minds. It is the moral effluvium out of which our modern civilization has constructed itself. Without it, the dense gloom and black obscurity of ignorance would have reigned supreme. Confused, chaotic, and enigmatic as the world now is—even in the full glare of its sunlight—without it (if it were possible to imagine such a state) the world would have been an enigma, a chaos and confusion worse confounded. For scepticism is, as it were, the sun in all its glory, as compared to the black oblivion of eternal night. If neither Luther nor Mohammed had been sceptics, there would have been no Reformation and no

Islam. They did not take everything for granted. They were not satisfied with things as they were. They looked into the heart of them and found much room for improvement. They examined what they could, rejected that which was spiritually objectionable to them, but made use of what was most appropriate to their respective situations. It was only those features that best suited the exigencies of the case that they were prompt to lay hold of.

Yet Mohammed was not of vigorous intellectuality, nor in any sense an original thinker. The constant repetition of formulas and reiteration of the same ideas that occur throughout the Koran show this. It is extremely probable that his mentality was at times overshadowed either by neurasthenic tendencies or a predisposition to melancholia, and this was more than likely heightened by a life of excessive mental concentration combined with asceticism.

But sincere as he was, Mohammed would not have been a true Arabian, had he not been diplomatic. Thus the commencement of the fourteenth surah is a clever but obvious device on his part ; a meeting of his enemies with their own weapons, a flinging back to them of their own words and objections to the truth in their own teeth. It is clear too that here, for the time being, he has resolved on a change of tactics and of front. To prove to them that

he is as of old the man to be trusted, he endeavours to disarm their incredulity by his own outspokenness and candour. As the sequel showed, he clearly demonstrates his own perspicacity and knowledge of human nature. He saw that by arguing with his countrymen, by always opposing their doubts with sophistry and argument, would be of little avail—useless, in fact. Such a course would but have encouraged and stimulated their opposition, on the ground that their beliefs, as worth refuting, were also based on truth or at least on strong evidence. Besides, Mohammed was painfully conscious of his own disability and helplessness to convince them by the performance of anything purporting to be miraculous. That on occasions he displayed artfulness and guile—duplicity, in fact—is not to be denied. The invention, e.g., of his night journey from Mecca to heaven viâ Jerusalem, was one of them. When he gave out that Gabriel had revealed to him the conspiracy that had been formed against him, which through ordinary means he had discovered, was another of these pious frauds. But after all, what are these trifles compared with those that in their myriads have been perpetrated by the great Church of Christendom ? What are they as compared to a long life of strenuous sincerity, great nobility and earnest effort in the cause of humanity ? It is impossible

to lose sight of the fact that in working for God, he was all the time raising his countrymen from a lower to a higher level.) Besides, the necessity of dissimulation, which is one of the heaviest taxes on a king, and the prerogative of a priest, is one of those idiosyncrasies that human flesh being heir to, even a prophet cannot at times escape from. We are reminded of the phrase: " Qui scit dissimulare, scit regnare "—He is a ruler who can conceal his thoughts—attributed to the Emperor Sigismund by that cultured and ambitious but false and subtle Pontiff Pius II, known as Aeneas Sylvius (Pius Aeneas): also the identical answer that Louis XI is said to have made to those who urged him to give his son Charles a better education, in order that the boy might in his day become a good king.

It was not only that Mohammed's enemies were sceptical of his powers and his mission, but they mistrusted his intentions. This, indeed, to a sincere and earnest man like himself, was a bitter pill; a pill he found it hard to swallow. For he was conscious of his own sincerity, and as time went on, an increasing following gave him greater confidence in the reality of his mission. Indeed in proportion as his self-confidence developed, his conviction in the power and unity of God became an ever increasing quantity. This increasing consciousness of God's power and

his own sincerity had the gradual effect of making him bolder and more aggressive, so that this outspokenness was a direct outcome of it, until at last Mohammed felt that it was his duty not merely to announce "Islam"—"*the true Faith,*" but to enforce its acceptance on the people. This, of course, as we know, was after his flight to Medina. True his own people, the Koreish, had driven him out with scorn and violence, had cast contumely and dishonour on him, by rejecting the word, while strangers had hearkened unto him and accepted it. It is equally true that the sustained vindictiveness shown by the Ḳoreish was sufficient in itself to excite the spirit of retaliation, even in a man of Mohammed's patient and tenacious character. But suggestive as this may be, it is quite certain that he acted on conviction in assuming the offensive. It is obvious, too, that in doing so, he felt that he was acting under divine compulsion. In any case, we must allow that "a man is really of weight in the balance of Fate, only when he has the right on his own account to cause men to be slain." In Mohammed's case, however, if conviction counts for anything, his right was a divine right. According to Dumas: "In human nature there are antipathies to be overcome—*sympathies which may be forced.*" (The italics are mine.) "Iron is not the loadstone; but by

rubbing it with a loadstone we make it, in its turn, attract iron." This may be, but it is not in reality so. It is but a mere figure of speech that the great novelist makes use of, and which he puts into the mouth of René, the poisoner, in support of some theory or argument. It is, of course, possible that antipathies may be overcome by sympathy. This, however, depends entirely on the power of the one and the weakness of the other. But sympathy cannot be forced. To endeavour to force sympathy is to attempt the unnatural. The most that can be expected from such a cause is dissimulation. This certainly was Mohammed's experience. Although ultimately he and his successors forced the word of God on these his inveterate enemies, he never succeeded in forcing his sympathies upon them. Death and Time alone accomplished what his own personality failed to do. Through the victory he gained by them, he now lives enshrined in the sanctified halo of a sympathy that, emanating from every Moslem heart, forms with his own the great and throbbing soul of Islam.

But Mohammed was not only spiritual. He, like every human being, had a material side to his character. Not only was he a preacher and a prophet ; not only was he a lawgiver—a law and a light unto his people to this very day ; but as one who

himself rigidly practised self-denial and economy and condemned extravagance, who possessed the organizing ability to administer the estate of others, and who could command preferably in peace, but if necessary in war, he was a statesman and an economist. Unquestionably too he looked ahead—he made provision for the future. His whole apostolic life was one long and arduous preparation for coming events. As an instance of this, the ordering of the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca was as much a political as a religious ordinance. By this measure of policy—this master stroke of psychologic insight into human eventualities, Mohammed showed his natural genius. For without a doubt he aimed at preserving to Arabia the point and focus of a religious centre, that would make for national consolidation and unity, and serve as the sacred reduit and rallying ground for the world of Islam. So too he showed his capacity for system and organization in legalizing the fifth part of all booty and property confiscated to be paid into the public treasury. In the same way he insisted on the giving of Zakat or alms for charitable purposes, apart from those contributions he received from his followers for maintenance. In making these ordinances appear as divine injunctions, Mohammed showed no more insincerity or inconsistence than he did in claiming the whole Koran

as a series of revelations. The political and economic factors were as much a radical part of his entire design, as the religious. The one could not exist without the other. Statesman as he was, he recognized that religious unity could only be firmly established through political co-operation, and that to secure national stability the sinews of war were essential.

It is all through quite obvious that he had the trading instinct of his people. In any case the training he received at the hands and in the employ of his uncle Abu Talib, as well as the subsequent management of Khadija's business, had imbued him very powerfully with business principles and practical ideas. Abu Talib, like his father and grandfather before him, carried on a considerable trade with Syria and Yemen. He carried to Damascus, to Basra and other places in Syria, the dates of Hijaz and Hijr, and the perfumes of Yemen, bringing back with him in return the products of the Byzantine Empire. Mohammed, as is known, accompanied him, and without doubt laid the foundation of an economic experience, that subsequently proved valuable.

Commerce has always been the greatest of civilizing factors. According to Buckle: "Among the accessories of modern civilization there is none of greater moment than

Trade." So too Hallam says: "Under a second class of events that contributed to destroy the spirit of the Feudal system, we may reckon the abolition of villenage, the increase of commerce, and consequent opulence of merchants and artisans, and especially the institution of free cities and boroughs. This is one of the most important and interesting steps in the progress of society during the Middle Ages, and deserves particular consideration." But this is all the more important as showing that trade was in reality a more powerful factor for civilization than Christianity, which after several centuries of hold on the people of Europe, had done little more than inflame them with a zeal and a zest for fighting. It is significant also that while Rome rose to her greatest eminence under the Ancestral worship of her founders, when she became Christian, Christianity did not prevent her from declining and falling into pieces. But it is equally significant that while the opulence conferred by commerce on Rome, eventually brought reaction and ruin upon her people, the effect it had upon the barbarians who overthrew the Eternal City, was sufficiently stimulating to encourage them to invade a degenerate empire. For the desire of wealth and plunder was but the first awakening of the spirit of commerce ·To be sure the crusades gave

a great stimulus to trade. But there was more of the militant spirit than Christianity about them. Besides, although commercial prosperity often accompanies war, reaction is certain to supervene. Obviously the essential importance of trade was a truth that the Merchant-Prophet soon recognized. Intuitively, and with the keenness of perception that marked him, he naturally utilized every lesson that it taught him and every advantage that it gave him. Nor has he been the only theologian who saw its utility in a religious light. The Jesuits long afterwards recognized the agency of commerce in promoting and diffusing religious belief, and became great merchants as well as great missionaries. So too it was through commerce, as Draper points out, "that the Papacy first learned to turn to art. The ensuing development of Europe" (in the Renaissance) "was really based on the commerce of *upper* Italy, and not on the Church. The statesmen of Florence were the inventors of the balance of power."

Quoting from Syed Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam*, Fihr, surnamed Koreish, a descendant of Maad—who flourished in the third century—was the ancestor of the tribe that gave to Arabia her prophet and legislator. This fact, trifling as it may appear, is, however, remarkable, if not significant. For this word

"Koreish" is derived from "Karash," to trade; and it appears that Fihr and his descendants were always devoted to commerce. From this it is safe to assume that trading was an inherent instinct in Mohammed.

This apart, to him personally Islam was a something more than a mere creed or belief. It was God's own religion sealed and delivered to him by God. Not to deliver it to his people as commanded, not to carry it through—by persuasion first of all, by fire and sword if man's obstinacy and rejection of it made it necessary—would mean that he had failed in his duty to the Most High. The sense and spirit of duty was stronger in Mohammed than in Nelson. In him it was not simply an active and vital principle. It was an impelling force. So inseparable from God, that to him it appeared as God Himself. But with him God always came first. His duty to his country was subordinate to his duty to his Maker. His duty to Him, therefore, was his duty to his country So in surah xi. he says: "O my people, do ye work according to your condition; I will surely work according to my duty," i.e. according to God. In numerous passages he points out that God was absolutely averse to profusion and extravagance, equally so to meanness. True liberality in his opinion consisted in the happy mean between the

two extremes. "And waste not thy substance profusely; for the profuse are brethren of the devils: and the devil was ungrateful unto his Lord" (surah xvii.). Again in the sixth, "But be not profuse, for God loveth not those who are too profuse"; and in the following the economic instinct shows itself most significantly: "O true believers, consume not your wealth among yourselves in vanity; unless there be merchandizing among you by mutual consent." Once more Mohammed demonstrates his great profundity and insight into the character, the customs and traditions of his countrymen. All Oriental and African nations from time immemorial have been notably extravagant, especially in regard to marriage ceremonials and funeral rites. Even to this day among the Hindus and most African tribes, it is a code of honour, a sacred injunction of their religion, to spend profusely on marriage and burial feasts. Indeed this is frequently done to the impoverishment, and, in the latter case, even to the ruination of whole families or households. The Arabs, it appears, were no exception to this. At the same time they were a curious blend of meanness and extravagance. To Mohammed, rigid economist as he was, and inspired to the core by the duty that had been intrusted to him, this prodigality was a great sin. Not only did his countrymen

squander away their substance in folly and luxury, but they were particularly guilty of extravagance in killing camels, and distributing them by lot merely out of vanity and ostentation. Worse even than this, they were given to the destruction of their female children. Against this evil Mohammed sternly set his face. This in itself shows his great moral superiority over his countrymen. It shows also the possession of a higher and more refined yet practical intelligence, that was able to grasp the economic possibilities which were bound to ensue from the preservation of female children. Essentially an Arab patriarch at heart (which he in some measure proved by his marriages), Mohammed, however, was still more essentially a Humanist. With the moral greatness of a good man, and the mental perception of genius, he felt and recognized that it was against all the laws of God to destroy the fecundity of and the productive in nature. Thus it was that he placed the divine tabu on the abuse and destruction of all that was beneficial to humanity, but especially on men, animals and the produce of the earth.

CHAPTER VI

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF MOHAMMED'S WORK AND WORTH

TAKEN as a whole, the Koran is certainly not a work of literary art. Mohammed, in a literary sense, was neither a poet nor a writer. He was, as he says of himself, only an illiterate apostle. This, from an artistic point of view, is of course regrettable. In his mother tongue he had a rich and splendid medium. A language of high philosophical and poetical character, that "follows the mind," as Burton says, and gives birth to its offspring: that is free from the "luggage of particles" which clogs our modern tongues—leaves a mysterious vagueness between the relation of word to word, which materially assists the sentiment, not the sense of the poet. A language too that luxuriates in "rich and varied synonyms, illustrating the finest shades of meaning," that are artfully used—"now scattered to startle us by distinctness, now to form as it were a star about which dimly seen satellites revolve." Finally which revels in a wealth of rhyme that leaves the poet almost unfettered

to choose the desired or exact expression. Undoubtedly in a literary sense, here at hand, was a mighty and magnificent weapon. A quiverful of musical arrows, quivering as they waited for the poetic muse—the fine frenzy, the seething imagination, the running ready fire—to launch them forth into the humming haunts and hearts of men. But in no sense was this Merchant-Prophet a knight-errant. Kindly and tender as he was towards women and children, he was not addicted (as his countrymen were) to chivalry in any form. The race of heroines of Al Islam had no attraction for him. The "Hawa (or 'Ishk') uzri," "pardonable love," of the Bedawin, a certain species of platonic affection, did not exist for him. He had no room for such trivialities in his life. It was too serious and pre-occupied. Too much occupied with the affairs of his Master, and worldly business matters that had to be attended to. So that he had no time to waste on such pleasantries. Trifles that were as light as air in contrast to the stern and deadly realities of existence. Yet without doubt he must have attended the annual fairs that were held at various places, at "Zul Mejaz," at Majna, and at Okadh. The latter, Syed Ameer Ali tells us, was a place famous in Arab tradition. It was the Olympia of Yemen. The fair held here in the sacred month of "Zu'lkada,"

was a great national gathering. A sort of "God's truce" was then proclaimed. War and the shedding of human blood was forbidden. To it came merchants with their wares from all parts of Arabia and other distant lands; also the poets and heroes of the desert. These (many of whom were disguised from the avengers of blood feuds in masks or veils) recited their poems, displayed their literary talents, and sang of their glory and their prowess. But Mohammed's aims and inclinations did not lie in this direction. He was too much of a working philosopher to be a mere poetic dreamer or play actor. His genius lay in his profound earnestness, his great moral strength, his capacity for work, his political foresight and acumen, his iron will and his inexhaustible patience. It is certain that he believed (in the philosophic principle) that "everything comes to him who waits." For he himself says: "Wait therefore the event, for I also will wait it with you. Obviously he was imbued with the same tenacity, and many of the imperturbable characteristics of the camel of his own Arabian deserts. Unquestionably he knew how "*to wait*," recognized that the essence of all human wisdom lies in this single feature, and that the greatest, the strongest and the most successful is he who waits and watches. It was thus that he waited with the unvarying

purpose and pertinacity of a man who knew and appreciated his own value at its proper worth. For he felt in every nerve and fibre of his consciousness, that as God makes no man or no thing in vain, the future must have some (great) thing, some great prize, in reserve for him. We know what that prize was. We know also that it only came to him after a life of unwearied toil, and assiduous devotion to his great and noble purpose, and then only in reality through the moral and spiritual victory which death gave him.

Yet, in spite of its artistic defects, Mohammed's work turned out, as we know, into a success that even he himself could never have anticipated. But in a spiritual sense, judging merely by results, the Koran has lost nothing because of its lack of literary art and beauty. Had it gushed all over with the eastern music of the Songs of Solomon, had it arrested the attention by the same aphoristic wisdom of the Proverbs, thrilled its readers by the recital of a tragedy so intensely powerful, so realistic and majestic as the drama of Job, and appealed to them through the joys, the sorrows and the grand poetry of the Psalms! Had it, in fact, sparkled all over with those beauties of language and metaphor that distinguish the Bible, the result that it might have attained could scarcely

have been greater than that which it has accomplished without these trappings. It is, in fact, probable that it might have lost. It is just possible that what it would have gained as an ornate work, it would have lost in sincerity. The Koran, in fact, was essentially the offspring of Mohammed's own unique personality. This, as I have tried to show, was the peculiar outcome of his dual environment—the frowning, rugged and arid aspect of stony mountains and sandy wastes, plus the commercial and political instincts that were inherent as well as developed on his trade journeys and at the various towns and marts which he visited. Nevertheless there was in this Semitic Puritan, as there is in almost every Arab, a certain rugged vein of poetry—the wild song of freedom—that bursts out here and there. But only now and then like the thunderstorm that is so great a rarity in the desert. For the gravity and over-concentration of his thoughts on the one definite object, oppressed him so weightily, that it left no time for others. Just as fast as rain is swallowed up by the parched and thirsty sand after a long spell of drought, so his soul, thirsting as it did after God, gulped and kept down the poetry and sentiment at bottom of him. (All the same, if a book is to be gauged by its net results—by the effect it has produced on all that is deepest and best

in human nature—then the Koran must necessarily take high rank as one of the world's greatest works. In much the same way, only in another and more material direction, the *Wealth of Nations* has also left its impress on the shaping of human destinies.

Mohammed's sincerity and fixity of purpose is a fact we cannot get away from. It is this which has chained his followers as with the sure cord of God to the Faith. Islam, in a word, is a creed of practice not theory. By practice it was formed. On practice it has lived. It was because Mohammed practised what he preached, that the small seed of his original idea blossomed at last into the mighty "Igdrasil" of the East—the great banyan tree of existence. Verily this sun-burnt son of Arabia Petræa was a tangible reality and no desert simulacrum. A reality that lives in the soul of Islam. A reality that will endure until the end of all things human. It is not manners that maketh the man. It is man that makes the manners. It is the nature that is around him, the nature that is in him, and that comes out of him as mental and moral energies, that makes the man. Town bred as he was, it was the desert in all its naked and silent grandeur that made Mohammed, that inspired him with all the might and majesty

of God, and turned him into a prophet. Yet it was his career as a trader and the inherent tribal instinct that developed the political element in him. As Longfellow says: "Glorious indeed is the world of God around us; but more glorious is the world of God within us. There lies the land of song, there lies the poet's native land." But in Mohammed's case, as in the case of all great workers and thinkers, the world that is around us, is the world of our inner consciousness. The two are synonymous if not one. Only with him the native earth was religion, and he was the Prophet, not the Poet of it. "It is Nature's highest reward to a true, simple, great soul, that he gets thus to be *a part of herself*." It was thus with Mohammed. Thought, though changeable, is eternal. It never dies. So the one idea that possessed Mohammed now possesses (differing only in merely superficial degrees) some two hundred and fifty millions.

Carlyle is mistaken, certainly much too premature, when he says: "Even in Arabia, as I compute, Mahommet will have exhausted himself and become obsolete, while this Shakespeare, this Dante may still be young; while this Shakespeare may still pretend to be a priest of mankind, of Arabia as of other places, for unlimited periods to come." Re-

ligion is entirely an universal matter, Thought a question of environment. Roughly speaking, the world of Thought is divided into two camps of east and west. To the former belongs Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam; to the latter Christianity and the growing cult of Rationalism. It is impossible to predict or in any way to foreshadow any fusion of these hostile elements. The day when humanism—i.e. the religion of humanity, as the natural product of her highest intellectual effort—shall have fused and humanized all the nations of the Earth into one great civilized family, is too far distant and beyond the present scope of human speculation.

If men are to be regarded especially as to the weight and power with which they operate on the minds of their fellow-men, then this camel-driving trader must without question be estimated as a great man—a man a long way above his fellows. Assuredly too it is chiefly through the Koran that his great and God-like thoughts, crystallized into greater motives and actions, have filtered down through the events and developments of thirteen centuries, as a purifying, fertilizing, and elevating factor.

Looking at him and his work from every aspect, Mohammed was not merely a heroic prophet. He was much more. A king and

a leader of men. A ruler and a judge over them. If we are to judge of him, to take him for what he is worth, by his work—the rich ripe fruit of his rare and strenuous effort—the Koran on the one hand, and, on the other, the mighty spiritual force he has left behind him in the Church of Islam, we must pronounce him to have been a great and remarkable man. A man who, when his true value is understood and appreciated, will stand out in history as a political and religious reformer of a virile and heroic type. A man who will be regarded in even a greater light than he now is, when humanity shall have become less denominational and more rationally humanitarian. In reality Mohammed was an ultra great man. The difference (as it appears to me) between other great men and himself was wide. The ordinary type of great man—a John Knox for example—is a patriot essentially. He is for his country first, then for God and humanity. As I have shown, with Mohammed it was just the reverse. An Arab by accident of birth, he put God and nature before everything. It was this that made him a humanist; this that placed him before his age. For Mohammed, without a shadow of a doubt, was centuries before his age. In his God concept, in his rejection of the ancient myth of immaculate conception, in his refusing to acknowledge Christ's divin-

ity, he was essentially a modern—a modern of the twentieth century. It was this catholicity therefore that made Islam blossom into a spiritual energy that embraces so many national units.

Mohammed fought with all his might and main. In exact proportion to his labour he has prevailed. Prevailed over the issues of life and death. Death had no terrors for him. Life alone was full of terror—i.e. of the fear of God. In death there was no sting. In the grave there was no victory. Death but killed the mortal part of him. The spiritual it has increased and multiplied out of all proportion. The present soul of Islam is the spirit of Mohammed. Only when this exhausts itself will Islam wither and die! To this day he is, and for many æons to come he will be in spirit, the ruler and judge over Islam. In spite of sects and theological speculators, as long as Islam lasts, his spirit will continue to preside over its destinies. His spirit lives in the spirit of the creed that he bequeathed as a divine legacy to humanity—i.e. to those sections of it which have been nurtured in the system and adoration of the Patriarch. For though the material part of him is dead, the spiritual still speaks with a voice that is myriad-tongued. As God's word, there is a sanctity in the Koran for every Moslem that exceeds

the reverence of the Christian for the Bible, as much as the fiery splendour of the sun surpasses the cold pale glamour of the moon —which is but a shadow, a pale reflection of the substance and reality. There is, in fact, on the part of the Moslem a veneration accorded to the Koran that practically equals the veneration of the African or the Irish for their land. Compatible with this, there is for the Moslem but one Prophet. As God's chosen agent for the dissemination of His word, Mohammed stands alone and aloof on a pinnacle that is humanly unapproachable. Many faults have been imputed to him, many charges brought against him. To the average, indeed even to the educated Christian, Mohammed is nothing but the very strangest compound of right and wrong, of error and truth, the abolisher of superstition according to his own showing, yet a believer in charms, dreams, omens, and jinns. But what of all this? Does not reasoning such as this itself prove how very inconsequent and inconsistent is man, even though he be a European and a Christian? Is not superstition of the same kind as rife at this very moment in Europe, nay in the very centres and strongholds of Christendom? What about the ikons, the charms, the amulets, the sacred relics and the images of the Greek and Romish Churches? Is not this

but a form of materialism which itself is a phase or part—a very large part—of Nature? Did not superstition (derived from "super," above or beyond measure, and "sto," to stand) originally imply excess of scruple, or of ceremonial observances in religion? Did it not describe a superfluity of worship that exceeded what was either enjoined or fitting? What does Cicero say of it in his treatise on *The Nature of the Gods*? (I quote from an old translation): "Not only Philosophers, but all our forefathers dydde ever separate *superstition* from true religion. For they whiche prayed all day that theyr children might overlyve (superstites essent), were called *superstitious*; which name after was larger extended." Is not this thing we call superstition—this belief in the super or rather outside natural as distinguished from the vague and merely vulgar absurdities that are so common—but the result of inherent instincts that humanity, as simply one form of natural development, derives direct from Nature? Is not this Naturism more or less developed in us all—more in the ignorant, less in the educated, and least of all in the scientist; the sceptic who knows most, because he has looked and searched more into the truth and reality of things; because he has learnt by experience, fact, knowledge, therefore a greater intelligence to discrimin-

ate which from what and why from wherefore? In any case, does not the fact that Mohammed was superstitious all the more clearly prove that he was no mere vulgar designer who practised self-deception and pretensions with regard to his mission, but that he was thoroughly sincere in believing himself to be the specially selected Apostle of the Great Designer and Controller of the universe?"

But it is not to Mohammed's faults that we must look. All great men are moulded out of faults. It is in his virtues and greatnesses —and they are many—that we will find the true man. In this Carlyle was a right guide, and showed his own breadth of mind and greatness. These prove Mohammed to have been one of humanity's greatest constructors. It is true that he destroyed, but on a small scale comparatively in proportion to the immensity of his constructive labour. As evidence of this, the physical, the moral and the spiritual wealth of Islam speaks in round numbers and solid realities. In another of his great romances, Dumas, speaking of John Knox, says: "He who had raised such a storm had need to be, and he was, a Titan; indeed John Knox was one of those men whom great religious and political revolutions invariably beget. Born in Scotland or England during the Presbyterian Reformation, they

are called John Knox or Oliver Cromwell; born in France, in the time of political reform, they are called Mirabeau or Danton." Mohammed was, in every sense of the word, more titanic than a Cromwell or a Mirabeau. He was not by nature or at heart a destroyer. When he destroyed it was only because his hand was forced by the crass and obstinate antagonism of those upon whom his sincerity and persuasiveness had aroused an envious and deadly hatred. The whole aim, end and object of his existence was to develop the adoration and religion of God. The storm he raised was conjured into being by the God that obsessed him. Hence the soul and constructiveness in it. Hence the mighty spirit of Islam, measurable only by a soul capacity which has never ceased to expand and develop. No sane man surely can deny that Islam was and is a great work? The moral figs and grapes that she has achieved are not such as could have been gathered from the thorn and thistle of human effort. Yet curiously enough, as I have shown, the environment in which it was born was strangely stern and sterile! This, however, is one of those natural anomalies that we would do well to leave alone. One of those paradoxes, those mysteries which Nature teems with, that are altogether beyond human comprehension.

Whether or not he had made a study of the Socratic precept "Γνῶθι σεαυτόν" "know thyself," Mohammed knew himself as thoroughly as it is possible for a man to do. Early in life he took his own measure. Gauged his own strength and weakness. Estimated the breadth, the length, and the depth to which he could go. As a result of this moral estimate, he felt that his resources without God were as slender as a broken reed buffeted by storm winds. He knew that his real strength lay in the knowledge and power of God and of Nature. The temperament and character of the Psalmist—he who looked on God as the strong tower and rock of his defence, his refuge, not however in time of trouble alone, but at all times—was strongly developed in him. The genius of the whole Semitic race was centred in Mohammed. It was this, amounting as it does to the sublimest egotheism, that gave him confidence, then conviction. It was this righteous conviction that carried him as it were on the wings of the wind—immortal breath and soul, as he pictured it—of the living and eternal God. Through this feeling he converted the innate fear and veneration that inspired him into the hand and power of the Almighty. If genius implies a keen psychological insight into the nature and inner consciousness of life's issues, added to inexhaustible energy, capacity for work and patience, then Mohammed was

a genius. Certainly, if we accept Buffon's definition of genius, as, "but a greater aptitude for perseverance," he was without doubt a genius of the highest degree. The founder of a faith—one of the greatest the world has produced—spiritual commander of the faithful, his genius was essentially moral and religious. His whole life was one long labour of love and devotion to achieve his object, i.e to proclaim God to the nations of the earth the first half of it passed in secular work but in silent contemplation; the second half, itself divisible into two periods, twelve years of persuasion, followed to the close by active aggression and battle.

Impulsive, passionate, and spontaneous Mohammed may have been, for like all great leaders he was many-sided. But in no sense of the word can Islam be said to have been the outcome of spontaneity. On the contrary, it was in every way the result of calm and deliberate reflection, of long and continuous contact with the forces and phenomena of Nature; but above all of an unceasing concentration and communion with the unseen power that controls them. Stretching over some twenty years, it went on uninterrupted by domestic cares or trade transactions. All these were secondary matters and had to give way to the central idea that occupied his whole mind, that revolved around his work and his thoughts, as the

earth gyrates about the sun. His centre of gravity was God. This gravity formed his character, gave him courage and endurance in all his trials and afflictions, counselled and guided him in his ordinary vocations. It was this gravity and concentration that commanded the respect and trust of all who knew him and came under his magnetic influence.

But Mohammed was not infallible. Dogma—everything human in fact—is open and liable to error. Even infallibility itself—as we speak of it—is fallible. As Draper so aptly remarks: "He who is infallible, must needs be immutable." In many of the ordinary ways of life he was no doubt changeable and inconsistent. He was, after all, only human—but not with regard to the Faith. Here was he as firm as a rock, and showed a fixity of purpose that nothing could shake or alter. With him, "Life was but a means to an end, that end, beginning, mean and end to all things—God." Only synchronous with this ruling principle was the idea of national unity. Never once did he falter or swerve from it. To this allegiance and fidelity of his to God and centralization it is possible to trace the devotion of Moslems to their Faith. "We are, as we often say, the creatures of circumstances. In that expression there is a higher philosophy than might at first sight appear. Our actions are

not the pure and unmingled results of our desires. They are the offspring of many various and mixed conditions. In that which seems to be the most voluntary decision, there enters much that is altogether involuntary—more perhaps than we generally suppose." This was very much the case with Mohammed. He was largely the creature of circumstances—the personification of his environment. It was the genius of this that entered into and obsessed him. That formed and swayed him as it willed. That made him as strong and inflexible as itself. That, combining with the commercial knowledge and experience he possessed and the political acumen he acquired, made him what he was. Here in a tiny nutshell lies the kernel and origin of the soul of Islam. The possibility that Mohammed was rather of Caucasian than Ishmaelitish descent, in reality makes little if any difference in the psychological analysis of his character. Fundamentally, human nature is human nature all the world over. In this respect racial and colour distinctions make no difference. Even moral and physical characteristics are merely superficial , classifications. Inherent tendencies, strong and rooted as they are, may be amended or modified by environment. So that although it is vaguely possible that his moral courage and other mental features were of Caucasian origin, in the main he was essen-

tially Semitic in character, patriarchal in principle, and humanistic in spirit. In Lecky's opinion: "If we take a broad view of the course of history and examine the relations of great bodies of men, we find that religion and patriotism are the chief moral influences to which they have been subject, and that the separate modification and mutual interaction of these two agents may almost be said to constitute the moral history of mankind." This most certainly has been the case with regard to Islam. Religion was the medium chosen by Mohammed for the furtherance of his truly imperial design. It was entirely through religion, or rather the interpretation he placed upon it, that he built up first of all a natural patriotism, then an international spirit, that expanded into the mighty creed of Islam. Prior to this, Arabia as he found it was narrow to an extreme. The only patriotism —if patriotism it can be called—was clannish and communal. Outside these stilted limits, every one was regarded with suspicion, contempt, indifference, and invariably with undisguised hostility. Yet the great and solid foundation of this splendid spiritual and temporal empire was laid by one man. But how great and how heroic! Indeed, "take him all in all, the history of humanity has seen few more earnest, noble and sincere 'prophets,' men irresistibly impelled by an

inner power to admonish and to teach, and to utter austere and sublime truths, the full purport of which is often unknown to themselves."

CHAPTER VII

MOSLEM MORALITY AND CHRISTENDOM'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ISLAM

THE better to gauge the present political aspect of the Moslem world, the statesmen of Europe—of France and Great Britain more particularly—should make an earnest study of the spirit of Islam. If we regard Islam as the work of Mohammed—as we are bound to—there are certain broad features we must also recognize. Right away from its very inception he worked not only as a prophet, but as a political reformer. Travelling as he did with his eyes, ears and all his senses open, the political state of the eastern portion of Europe and the western side of Asia must have been well known to him. To accomplish his religious ends was impossible without the political unity of Arabia. To him the political and religious unity of his country were synonymous. As a shrewd and practical trader, the material advantages of commerce were taken into consideration. He recognized that without a sound commercial basis and political unity there could be no national stability. He also saw that in a

country like Arabia, split up into clans and communities, it was only possible to effect this through the spiritual potentialities of the one and only true God. If he did not himself accomplish this great project, we know at least that it was the magnificent legacy he bequeathed to his followers in the spirit of Islam, that eventually did so in reality. He or the spirit he evoked was clearly and unmistakably the cause of all subsequent Moslem triumphs, intellectual and political as well as religious. Thus it was that scarcely eighty years after his death, Islam reigned supreme over Arabia, Syria, Persia, all the northern coast of Africa, including Egypt, as well as Spain. So, too, notwithstanding the internal schisms and rifts that subsequently took place, it kept on growing with great strides, until at last in 1453, the Crescent gleamed from the spires of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and the soul-stirring war cry "La ilah illa Allah" resounded seventy-six years afterwards before the very gates of Vienna. Lecky is undoubtedly right in assuming that: "To trace in every great movement the part which belongs to the individual and the part which belongs to general causes without exaggerating either side is one of the most difficult tasks of the historian." But in the case of Islam there can be no mistake. True, the Arabs in themselves were a great and virile people. But

it was the genius of Mohammed, the spirit he breathed into them through the soul of Islam, that exalted them. That raised them out of the lethargy and low level of tribal stagnation, up to the high water mark of national unity and Empire. It was in the sublimity of Mohammed's deism, the simplicity, the sobriety and purity it inculcated, the fidelity of its founder to his own tenets, that acted on their moral and intellectual fibre with all the magnetism of true inspiration To them Islam was the Faith —the Faith God

Just as Christianity stands for the faith of the great European family of nations, Islam stands for those countries whose political institutions are still based on the Patriarchal system. But Europe—however superior her peoples may think themselves—is not in the position, and certainly cannot afford, to look down upon Islam as an inferior product of an inferior section of the great human family. East may be East, and West, West—the system of one represented by polygamy, of the other by monogamy. But because Christianity is conformable to European ideals and notions, it does not in the least follow that it is compatible with those of the East. Because the civilized net result it has effected has eventually proved greater than that achieved by Islam, is no evidence whatever of Islam's worthlessness or decadence. It is not

the spirit of Islam that has failed, but the people who believe in it. They have fallen away from the high ideal that was set them by their master. In this respect, however, Christianity has also degenerated. It is a creed of profession more than of practice. It has never consistently practised what it has preached. A very wide gulf divides its practices from its ideals. "If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching." So Shakespeare. This holds as good now as when he wrote it. Human nature never alters fundamentally. It is the same to-day as it was yesterday, and as it will be unto all eternity. Christendom much more so than Islam, is split up into sects and denominations, and there can be no question about it that the chief obstacle to unity among these various bodies at the present moment is want of sincerity and earnestness!

Compared with the average Moslem, the average Christian too is certainly lukewarm. The nearest approach to Moslem perfervidness is in the piety of the Irish Catholics. But devotional as they are, even this falls far short of the rigid practice of the true Moslem. Not

only, however, is he fervid and in downright earnest, but he is above all constant, faithful, and consistent to the principles of his creed. Thus, although there is no fatherhood about Allah, there is for all that a true and real brotherhood in Islam which contrasts very favourably with the professed brotherhood of Christendom. Colour or race, for instance, makes no difference to it. Islam, in fact is above all such petty differences. She draws no hard and fast rules, has no such violent antipathies, bigotries and prejudices as Christendom. Professes little but practises much. Colour in her eyes is no disgrace, no bar to God, much less therefore to human fellowship and assimilation. This, as we know, is not the case with Christians. To them colour and race (as witness in the United States of America) is an impassable barrier, that is more insurmountable even than the great wall of China, over which they find it impossible to step.

There are in nature, as Novalis endeavours to explain in his philosophical romances, many realities and verities, the truth or essence of which cannot be grasped by the cold and critical intellect of man. Only by and through the sympathetic intuition of feeling can truths such as these be known or understood. This is indeed so. No matter how hard and material we may be, however

thoroughly scientific ; no matter how high we may place reason—even on the highest pinnacle of human attainment, there are times when the emotions overpower and dominate it. There are times when reason, even in its calmest and most calculating moments, is simply inundated and overwhelmed by the flood-tide of human feelings. In any case it is clear that although in the abstract it is impossible to detach or even insulate thought from feeling and feeling from volition, these three—feeling, thought and will—act, and often co-operate together, in every mental causation. But it is just as difficult for a system to free itself from its own peculiar idiosyncrasies and prejudices as it is for an individual to dissociate himself from his motives. It is exactly the same with regard to Islam and Christendom. The latter has allowed its prejudices and its feelings to obliterate or to stultify its reason. It does not know, it does not understand Islam. Merely because it does not want or makes no effort to know or to understand it. Because it has no sympathy with it. Because in place of sympathy it is in reality antipathetic. Yet while professing toleration, Christendom does not hesitate to despise and condemn Islam. To Christendom, Islam is a mere creed and abstraction—a creed beyond and outside its cold and autocratic pale. A creed belonging to another world and heaven

than its own. A creed of colour and of sombre shades, nay even of gloom and darkness, blood, fire and sword, when the crescent and green flag of the Jihad is hoisted; a creed which is not to be thought of in the same breath as the snow-white fabric of the transcendent cross.

The fact of the matter is, that Christendom in the earlier days of Islam, jealous and fearful of her younger and more vigorous rival, always recoiled from Islam under the veil of a self-satisfied cant, as from a monstrous monstrosity of the most vicious and immoral type. A form of "Moloch horridus," bristling all over with polygamous excrescences, and cruel sharp-pointed spines, ever ready to thrust their awful venom into the unoffending human species. Yet if only Christendom had long ago cultivated the virtue of patience, and the breadth and depth of mind, to look into the matter, she would have discovered—as those sceptics who have done so have discovered—the pure and unadulterated truth. She would have found, that as the Moloch horridus of Australia conceals an inoffensive character under a weird if repulsive exterior; so Islam, under an outward form which bigotry and prejudice have exaggerated out of all shape, possesses a moral and spiritual value beyond all cavil or question. Islam no doubt has its faults and many of them. The position of women is

not perhaps as it should be. The law and the practice of divorce is a real blot on her system. Education is at a low ebb. The custom of the separation of sexes, of which polygamy and divorce are the necessary outcome, are undoubtedly pernicious. It cannot, of course, be expected that young men and women who have never met or associated, and whose marriages are arranged for them, can have any exalted ideas or feelings on the subject of love. It is not possible that young men who have never felt the refining influence and the moral restraint of female society, can possess either chivalry or a high ideal, with regard to an element unique in itself. Nevertheless, contrary to received European opinion, there exists for all that a very real and hearty affection and a warm sympathy between Moslem husbands and wives. What is more, this affection and sympathy will possibly contrast quite favourably with the family devotion of most European countries.

With regard to women, however, the social system, it must be admitted, is less successful. It leaves room for improvement. The institution of female slavery is distinctly a blot. The lot of the Moslem girl morally and socially is not so much unhappy as neglected. Her ordinary education is practically negative the religious part of it is regarded as superfluous. But it is a popular fallacy, as I have

already pointed out, to attribute to Islam the doctrine that women have no souls. Unfortunately, however, the idea prevails generally throughout Europe that these precious possessions are ignored by modern custom: that the fair sex is not encouraged to pray either in private or in public. It is believed, too, that the vigorous ritual prescribed for the male members is considered sufficient for both. So that Moslem women by ignoring the one neglect the other, with consequences that are morally and physically disastrous. But these are not by any means the real facts of the case. Personally, of course, I cannot speak of such matters from experience. Isolated and secluded as the women of Islam are and their privacy so rigorously guarded by a ring fence of stringent rules, it is not possible for the European to give an adequate opinion thereon. But according to the reliable authority of so eminent a Moslem as Syed Ameer Ali, and others, the women among civilized Moslem communities know their prayers and religious duties just as well as the men—and are devout and pious—more so perhaps than the other sex. As to their cleanliness, it is beyond question. Yet in spite of so many obstacles—no education, seclusion, and a generally defective training—the women are not unhappy. They are on the whole as fully occupied (in their own

way of course) and as well cared for as the women of Europe.

The fact of the matter is, Islam is suffering from mental stagnation, from the inevitable reaction that always succeeds a long period of active development. The Arabs, in a word, have had their day. With regard to education generally, the teaching is of a stereotyped pattern. There is no freshness or originality about it. Moslem studies have, in fact, lost all or most of their vitality. "The bloom of Arab culture has long been brushed away, and there now remains only a hollow kernel." But it is after all by her virtues and not her defects that we must appraise the true value of Islam. Most unquestionably she has great and redeeming features. The throwing of stones or of mud is at best an injudicious proceeding. Apart from this it is undignified and unworthy of so high a civilization. It is not for Christendom to throw stones any more than it is for Islam. Indeed, in this respect, Europe could well take a leaf out of the book of Moslem self-restraint and dignity. Moslem society, too, may compare very favourably with European. Taken in the mass, the polygamous Moslem is every whit as moral—more so in fact—than his English, French, or German contemporary. In a great measure pologamy is much more a theoretical than a

practical institution. Not one in twenty Moslems has even two wives. In any case it is not in the proper and legitimate practice of polygamy, but in the abuse of it, that the evil lies. On the whole there is no promiscuous immorality among the followers of Islam. Drunkenness and prostitution are practically non-existent. In towns where Europeans have made them a necessity, they are always worse. Abstinence and sobriety are not only professed but practised. In these respects the young Moslem certainly stands above his contemporary in Europe. Marrying early as he does, he knows nothing of "the wild oats" that are so promiscuously and so religiously sown by the youth of Europe. He sows no rank or noisome weeds for his children's children to reap a gruesome harvest. As far, therefore, as the male sex are concerned, the social system of Islam is certainly more moral and wholesome than that of Christendom.

The cult of Mormonism, as it has existed and still exists in Utah State and Salt Lake City, is a problem that should set all statesmen thinking! As a psychological conundrum and from a rational standpoint, it is a most interesting question. It confronts us with a dual anomaly! First of all by the enforcement of a sociological system in distinct opposition to, and in defiance of all ethnic conditions. To make the anomaly all the

greater, the religious part of this cult is founded on a palpable sham. There is not even about it the possibility of reality that always exists at the back of many ancient myths.

The so-called revelation of Joseph Smith, is the clumsy imposture of a man who in no sense of the word was either great or sincere. It is unquestionably the work of one or more persons who initiated the movement in their own self-interests, and to cloak principles that were at complete variance with Christian doctrine and European opinion. Mohammed, as we know, did not receive any revelation "on the eternity of the marriage covenant, or the plurality of wives." This, according to Mormon statement, was reserved for Joseph Smith alone. As a great statesman and prophet, Mohammed recognized polygamy to be an ethnic condition, therefore wisely did not interfere with it. Any radical innovation in this direction would have been more than a political error. As a revolutionary measure, it would have completely upset the entire fabric of Arabian and Eastern society. A pandemoniac topsy-turveydom would have been the immediate consequence. The death-knell of Islam, the direct result. Yet the very personal god of Joseph Smith was so very short-sighted or painstaking that he sanctioned absolutely a mere matter of domestic arrangement and economy. Could

any two extremes present a wider and more striking contrast? Is it possible even to compare the splendid sincerity of this sublime creed of self-surrender to God—the soul of which came direct from all that is great in nature—with the thin transparency of what at best was a poor attempt at fiction, which emanated from the mentality of a human mediocrity? Is it justifiable to mention them in the same breath?

Yet in spite of these startling contradictions, it is quite certain that the Mormon State, in an economic sense, is a prosperous, flourishing and thriving community. Its people too are orderly, well-behaved, law-abiding and industrious. From a moral and social standpoint, there is no fault to find with them. The anti-polygamic legislation of the United States Government, although it has recently been enforced with much greater severity than at first, has not stamped out polygamy. Does this or does this not demonstrate that polygamy—which in the eyes of Christendom constitutes one of the chief offences of Islam—is not the crime it is represented to be? Is it, in fact, a crime at all? Does it not prove that only the abuse of it, as the abuse of any, even a good thing, is wrong? But that the actual system itself as an ethnic condition peculiar to certain racial sections of mankind, is nothing but the outcome or

evolution of sociologic customs and usages?

To contend as all the Mutalazite doctors do that Islam is not a polygamous system because it only tolerates a limited polygamy under stringent conditions which tends to monogamy is but a metaphysical quibble. It is but an attempt to split a hair. It does not alter the fact that when a system permits more than one wife, and its founder sanctioned four, it is certainly not monogamous. Such an argument will not hold water for even a moment. It is but a mere contention—"a bone," as the Persian proverb says, "thrown to two dogs," a palpable piece of sophistry. It is but the begging of an obvious fact, a reality that can neither be avoided nor eluded. As Burns so very happily puts it:

> "But facts are cheels that winna ding
> An downa be disputed."

From theories such as this, Islam can derive no benefit. Just as in a broad sense she can suffer no disparagement from the fact that she countenances polygamy, she can afford to dispense with any such apologies. It is always a sounder principle to look truth in the face, even if that truth is unpalatable. However much civilization or the march and progress of events may ultimately modify polygamy, the actual custom itself was but an outcome of circumstances and conditions

that at the time were inevitable and did not (as they do not now) imply a crime against or subversion of natural laws. To stigmatize a system that time and usage have sanctified for thousands of years, merely because it offends *the easily outraged feelings of a super-sensitive Christendom*, or even on other grounds, is, to say the least of it, undignified. To impute a crime to the thing itself is almost, but not quite, on a par with the theology that pronounces a child to be the product of a sinful act. If the cause is sinful, the effect must also be sinful? Such a theory is certainly unnatural, if not monstrous! It is a perversion of that Nature from which we ourselves have evolved, and of that God or First Cause from which all causes and effects have proceeded.

Regarding this question from the broadest of standpoints, there is no need of an apology. Contention such as that of the Mutalazite doctors, casts too much of a reflection—an insult almost—on the great spirit and the splendid traditions of Islam. It is altogether unworthy of her. The fact of a polygamous system did not in one whit detract from the splendour of the empire that was built upon Mohammed's virile creed, although the subsequent abuse of it may possibly have done so. Even admitting that monogamy is an improvement on polygamy, the Christian Faith

was yet young when Mohammed first founded Islam. Thirteen hundred years make a vast difference in the aspect of social progress and development. And as I have already pointed out, even Mohammed, with all his great power and influence, dared not have upset the corner-stone upon which the entire social fabric of the Patriarchal system was based. However great he was as a Prophet, he was much too great a statesman to have even spent a thought on an innovation so startlingly radical and revolutionary.

But Christendom in the mass has never rationally considered this question from a broad-minded and liberal aspect! The attitude of its missionaries towards the great Moslem Church is, to say the least of it, uncalled for and unjustifiable. Their irrational arrogance and aggressiveness is only exceeded by their psychological ignorance of Islâmic spirit and morality, added to an overweening egotism, blind bigotry and narrow sectarian prejudices. In a dual sense their attitude is offensive in the extreme. Offensive because it is hostile as well as impertinent. To attempt the conversion of Islam is a liberty that amounts to licence in face of its utter futility. This in itself demonstrates an ignorance of ethnic conditions on the part of European statesmen and missionaries that is as amazing and preposterous as it is de-

plorable. So, too, to denounce Islam, as Christian missionaries do in no unmeasured terms, in books, on platforms and in the pulpit, is surely unpardonable—surely a reflection on civilization. Christianity will never convert or supplant Islam. As long as the one lasts the other will endure. From the most catholic of standpoints, from a religious, a social, a political, and an economic sense, it would be sounder and more politic to leave Islam alone. It would be more to the point if Christian missionaries devoted their energies to the bottom dogs of the slums of their own European cities, and to rescue the poor helpless infants who in their thousands are being slowly done to death through vice and crime that is worse than bestial. Unquestionably there is in our own European system a moral cancer that is just as virulent as any that Islam can produce. This indeed is a question that European statesmen should turn their attention to. For more than anything, it is this onslaught on the strongholds of Islam by Christendom, that explains the Moslem menace. The one, if it exists, is but a counterblast to the other.

It is an indisputable fact that in China and in various parts of the world, the high-handed interference and injudicious zeal of Christian missionaries—outrunning all discretion, tact, and common sense—has fre-

quently been the cause of war and bloodshed. Is this, I ask, compatible with Christian tenets and professions? Do not practices such as these fall far short of the high ideals that are so consistently flourished in the face of those who are outside its pale? Do they not bring moral discredit on a great creed, and tend to reduce it to the low level of mere and fulsome cant? But one small specimen of this open and undisguised hostility will suffice. In the *X.Y.Z.* of July 24, 1908, under the heading in large type of "ISLAM THE ENEMY," appears the following: "At the annual meeting held in connexion with the Church Missionary Society at Harrogate recently, the Rev. W. Y. Potter said: 'The calls which are most urgent are perhaps those to combat advancing Mohammedanism in West Africa, to direct the new desire for learning in China, to protect the Japanese nation from Agnosticism, by gathering in the millions in these lands into the folds of the Christian Church.'"

A sentence like this speaks for itself. It is self-condemnatory. It condemns the speaker and the whole system which advances and encourages such narrow and vicious methods. It condemns, too, a journalism that gives such poor and unworthy utterances a place, even as a mere "Fill up."

Islam is not an enemy. It is Christendom only that makes her so. It is that craven

conscience, which finding in her a teacher and a worker of solid worth, has aroused the envy and malice of the ever jealous theological spirit, which has invariably been responsible for so much war and bloodshed. It is a relic of the same militant envy that, burning with fury throughout the Dark Ages, fired the Crusades to a very great extent. A cramped and dogmatic spirit such as this does not surely represent the true spirit of modern Europe, which is presumably rational and reasonable, and consistent with the genius of progress and advancement. There is no real and spontaneous Moslem menace. Even, however, if there is, it is but the re-echo of these aggressively Christian sentiments. It is but the answer to a challenge, as undignified and contemptuous as it is aggressive and defiant. Islam, I repeat, is not an enemy, but a co-worker with us in the great and glorious cause of uplifting humanity from a lower to a higher civilization. Islam has neither intention nor design of encroaching upon the spiritual preserves of Christendom. Further, she has no itching wish to do so. Her leaders have the common sense to recognize that Christendom is separated from her by ethnic laws and social customs that are indivisible. She is only too willing, all, in fact, she asks, is to be left alone to work in her own sphere of influence. Is it not possible, then, for a Christendom professing

so vast a moral and every other kind of superiority, to meet her half way, to make a truce or compromise to the effect that each should work in its own legitimate sphere? A pugnacious method such as she pursues towards Islam is as bad, worse in fact, than a thousand red rags to an infuriated bull. For like the unfortunate victim in a Spanish bull-fight, tormented to its death by matadors, piccadors, torreadors, and a host of other "dors," Islam is beset and heckled by the frothy vapourings of theocratic firebrands, and the unbridled licence of Europe's gutter press.

The origin of Islam, as I have described it, is in itself evidence of Islam's moral and spiritual stability—of that part of her which has not deviated from, but clung to the spirit of her great Founder. But even allowing for denominational deviations, Islam in the mass is truly devout.

The two creeds represent two absolutely divergent sections of humanity. Unquestionably in a social, moral and religious sense, Islam is Islam, and Christendom, Christendom. To remedy this divergence, to bring the two sections together, enters into the impossible.

A natural arrangement such as this cannot be interfered with or altered. Defective as it is from a human aspect, it is all the same irremediable—a hiatus as wide apart as the suns in space, beyond the power of human

effort to bring together. It is only possible for the rational gospel of humanism, the great religion of natural sympathy, to heal the breach. This it can only do by turning humanity into one great human family. This alone would sweep away the disturbing factors of creeds, denominations, and sects. But is such a thing possible ? Scarcely ! Certainly not so long as the egotism and egotheism of man is so predominant a force in human sociology, or so long as the present physical and mental environments of the two sections remain the same.

CHAPTER VIII

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM: ETHNIC SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

BUT apart from all these weighty considerations, the attitude of Europe towards Islam should be one of eternal gratitude, instead of base ingratitude and forgetfulness. Never to this day has Europe acknowledged in an honest and whole-hearted manner the great and everlasting debt she owes to Islamic culture and civilization. Only in a lukewarm and perfunctory way has she recognized that when, during the Dark Ages, her people were sunk in feudalism and ignorance, Moslem civilization under the Arabs reached a high standard of social and scientific splendour, that kept alive the flickering embers of European society from utter decadence.

Do not we, who now consider ourselves on the topmost pinnacle ever reached by culture and civilization, recognize that had it not been for the high culture, the civilization and intellectual as well as social splendour of the Arabs, and to the soundness of their school system, Europe would to this day

have remained sunk in the darkness of ignorance? Have we forgotten that the Mohammedan maxim was that, "the real learning of a man is of more public importance than any particular religious opinions he may entertain"—that Moslem liberality was in striking contrast with the then intolerant state of Europe? Have we forgotten that the Khalifate arose in the most degenerate period of Rome and Persia, also that the greater part of Europe lay unde the dark cloud of barbarism? Does the magnificent valour of the Arabs, inspired as it was by a theism as lofty as it was pure, not appeal to us? Does not the moderation and comparative toleration shown by them to the conquered, notwithstanding the fierce and burning ardour to regenerate mankind that impelled them onwards to conquest, also appeal to us? Does it not all the more appeal to us, when we contrast this with the bitterness of the attitude of the Christian sects towards one another? Especially when we consider that in Christendom as it was then constituted, extortion, tyranny and imperial centralization, combining with ecclesiastical despotism and persecution, had practically extinguished patriotism, by substituting in its place a schismatic and degenerate church.

Is it not obvious that in her outlook on

Islam, Europe has overlooked her own Dark Ages—that awful period of intellectual oblivion which commenced with the decline of classical learning subsequent to the establishment of the barbarians in Europe in the fifth century, and continued down to the Renaissance, i.e. towards the end of the fourteenth century? Is it too not evident that she has lost all recollection of the torn and disturbed state of Christendom even in the middle of the fifteenth century when the Renaissance was in full swing, or had at least run half its course? How few Europeans there are who know the name of Æneas Sylvius—fewer still who can remember the striking and vivid picture he has drawn of the state of Europe in those days of dawning intelligence! Yet this prelate, afterward Pope Pius II, sums up the then European situation in a curious but concise and explicit document—a species of state paper dated 1454. Possessing as he did a personal knowledge of Europe, and being a man of great natural shrewdness and power of observation, Æneas Sylvius was of all men then living the best qualified to describe the state of affairs at this period. So that his observations are not only significant, but entitled to weight and consideration.

Discussing the prospects of the projected crusade, he praises warmly Philip of Burgundy for his readiness in the matter, then

gives his reason for concluding that the Diet at Frankfort must be a failure. For there is no real unity in Christendom; neither Pope nor Cæsar is duly reverenced or believed in; they are but feigned names or painted effigies—each state has its own king: there is a prince to every house. Italy is disturbed, Genoa being at feud with Aragon; nay, worse, Venice has actually a treaty with the Turk. In Spain are many kings, all differing in power, government, aims and opinions. There is even war too there about Granada. France is still looking uneasily across the Channel at England, her old foe, and England watches France. The Germans are divided, without coherence; their cities quarrel with their princes; their princes fight among themselves. Luxemburg is a cause of dispute between the King of Bohemia and the Duke of Burgundy.

Is it possible that Europe is unmindful of, and has the ingratitude to ignore, the splendid services of the scientists and philosophers of Arabia? Are the names of Assamh, Abu Othman, Alberuni, Albeithar, Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna), the great physician and philosopher, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) of Cordova, the chief commentator on Aristotle, Ibn Bajja (Avempace) besides a host of others, but dead letters? Is the great work that they have done, and the fame they have left behind

them in their books, to be consigned to the limbo of oblivion, by an ungrateful because antipathetic Europe? Does the work of Alhazen, author of optical treatises, who understood the weight of air, corrected the Greek misconception or theory of vision, and determined the function of the retina, count for nothing? Do we owe no tribute to a great thinker such as Ghazali, who in speaking of his attempts to detach himself from his youthful opinions says: "I said to myself, my aim is simply to know the truth of things, consequently it is indispensable for me to ascertain what is knowledge?" It cannot be that already we have lost sight of the amazing intellectual activity of the Moslem world, during the earlier part of the "Abbasid" period more especially? It cannot be that we have quite forgotten the irrecoverable loss that was inflicted on Arabian literature and on the world at large by the wanton destruction of thousands of books that was prompted by Christian bigotry and fanaticism? It cannot surely be said of Christian Europe that for centuries now she has done her best to hide her obligation to the Arabs? Yet most assuredly obligations such as these are far too sacred to lie much longer hidden! Let Europe—Christendom rather—confess and acknowledge her fault. Let her proclaim aloud to her own ignorant masses,

and to the world at large, the ingratitude she has displayed, and the eternal debt she owes to the Islam she no longer despises. Open confession is good for the soul, and only a confession such as this can wipe off the black stain which has for so long besmirched her fair fame. Let Christendom once and for all recognize that the greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none—that acknowledging a fault is saying, only in other words, we are wiser to-day than we were yesterday. Only through magnanimity such as this can she claim redemption. For she must surely know that "injustice founded on religious rancour and national conceit cannot be perpetrated for ever."

Let me endeavour to make my meaning somewhat clearer, by means of two simple illustrations—the one belonging to the eighteenth century, the other to the twentieth. "How many great men do you reckon ?" Buffon was asked one day. "Five," answered he at once ; "Newton, Bacon, Liebnitz, Montesquieu, and myself."

Some five to six years ago, the present German Emperor, in giving his views on divine revelation and manifestation, is said to have expressed himself as follows : "To promote man's development God has revealed Himself in man, whether he be priest or king, whether heathen, Jew, or Christian.

So in Moses, Abraham, Homer, Charlemagne, Luther, Shakespeare, Goethe, Kant, and the Emperor William the Great, whom God thus sought out to achieve imperishable results. His grandfather often said that he was an instrument in God's hands."

Comment on my part of any kind would be but an insult to the intelligent or sympathetic reader. But the way in which Islam is studiously ignored in both cases is surely significant and luminous. These are but two mere examples taken at random, but they are typical of European arrogance, egotism, and her general attitude of supercilious apathy towards the Moslem world. After all—even when an enlightened emperor is concerned—it is but a step, and a short quick step, from the sublime to the ridiculous.

In Europe's own interest it would in the end repay her statesmen to treat the world of Islam with greater sympathy and toleration, also with but ordinary justice. These remarks apply more forcibly of course to Great Britain and France. From the standpoint of the highest statesmanship, these two states should utilize the power they possess towards the attainment of this wise and politic object. Instead of permitting any such impolitic measures (as e.g. those made by Christian missionaries to proselytize) they should, by every means that lies within their power,

advance, encourage, and stimulate the work of Islam in its own proper and legitimate sphere of influence. Reflection will remind them that intolerance or persecution in any form, as the history of Christianity itself proves, always aided, but never deterred, the development of any creed. These facts alone ought to recommend the study of Islam to all British statesman. But in addition, I would point out to them one feature that is worth looking into. This is, that the same blend of materialism and spirit, the same desire for unity, cohesion and construction, which characterized Mohammed's efforts, have operated also in the building up of the British Empire. It is practically out of these forces, but under different aspects and conditions of social and physical environment, that England has expanded into Greater Britain. Given the same conditions and environment, and the same vigorous people, and there is no knowing what the true spirit and fervour of Islam might not have effected. Remember that the soul of Islam, as the Prophet left it, did not lack in spiritual stamina. The lack of it has been in her disciples, who have found it difficult to live up to the rigid standard that was set them by their Lord and Master. In a great international or rather intercreedal question such as this, it is highly impolitic to make comparisons, more especially when the

creeds in question represent a sphere of thought and a sociological system so widely divergent as Islam and Christendom. All the same, there are facts that the latter should be reminded of. Throughout its great and growing history, particularly its earlier career when fanaticism was excusable, militant and violent as she has been, Islam never descended to so hateful a system as the diabolical Inquisition, never stained the great soul of her Faith by ruthless and bloody massacres such as those of the Albigenses, Waldenses, and St. Bartholomew. On the contrary, she showed a spirit of religious toleration that was as rational as it was remarkable. Indeed under the Ommiades of Spain (755-1031) this was in every sense greater, higher and wider than that which prevails at present in modern Spain. It is true of course that Ma'mun, one of the Abbasid Caliphs, established in 833 A.D. a mihna or Inquisition, in order to uphold the rationalism of the Mu'tazilite doctrine against orthodoxy. But it was shortlived. For soon after his successor W'athik is said to have officially abandoned rationalism; and in fourteen years from its initiation, the cruel and bigoted Mutawakkil sternly put his foot on it, and with it the Inquisition. This, however, was not an Inquisition such as that of the Romish Church. In reality it was but a council established with the object only of

introducing rationalism into the empire and to keep out reactionaries from the State Service. In other words, it was but a "Test," which was promulgated and administered on the same lines and principles as the Test Act in England. Is it wise then for the statesmen of Europe to ignore such weighty facts? Would it not be more politic on their part to take cognizance of them? It is on facts such as these that European policy in its relationship to Islam should be based. It is only by making the study of universal history a science that the politician can ever hope to become a statesman. This means a thorough and comprehensive grasp of ancient as well as modern history. Such a grasp alone will enable him to look into the future and shape his policy. But to do so without a complete knowledge of Islam's history in the past, and the manifest part she has yet to play in the history of the future, is to show an utter ignorance of statecraft, but especially of that wider sphere of "welt politik" which bears the same analogy to the former as, in military parlance, strategy does to tactics. These shapers of the destinies of their various nations must remember that Islam has done for the East, or rather for the world of polygamy, what Christendom has done for the West or world of monogamy. She has uplifted millions upon millions of human beings from a

much lower to a far higher scale of civilization. In Africa and in Asia she has purified the primitive cults of their sacrificial abominations has introduced a better and humaner legislation, has encouraged commerce and industries and established a more stable form of government. Finally, she has exalted the supreme God, whose worship had practically fallen into abeyance, to a pinnacle of solitary grandeur, and in this way uplifted the people into a far higher moral and spiritual atmosphere. To quote Stanley Lane Poole, she has given them "a form of pure theism, simpler and more austere than the theism of most forms of Christianity, lofty in its conception of the relation of man to God, and noble in its doctrine of the duty of man to man, and of man to the lower creation." Islam, in fact, has done a great work. She has left a mark on the pages of human history which is indelible, that can never be effaced—that only when the world grows wiser will be acknowledged in full—in other words, when the sun of knowledge shall have dispelled the black clouds of ignorance. But Islam is still doing, and will continue to do, the great work that her founder initiated. This is a work that Christianity can never do. Islam too has a mission. But her mission is in quite another sphere to that of Christendom. • It is (and has for some time been) the preconceived opinion in Europe

hat the power and influence of Islam since the waning of her conquests have come to a standstill. That morally and spiritually her influence is demoralizing and corruptive—the bane, in a word, of those nations that she is proselytizing. But this is not so. Never was a greater and more unpardonable mistake made than this. An error rather than a mistake. The wish but prompts the thought. There is still much moral and spiritual vitality in Islam, therefore elasticity and power of expansion. In Africa especially, among all the Bantu and negroid tribes whose sociology is patriarchal, there is a great work for her to do. These peoples by their whole social system and in every moral sense belong to the sphere of Islam and not of Christendom.

To judge or even criticize Islam from a European standpoint is uneven. To get her proper measure, Islam must be weighed from the aspect of the ethnic basis upon which she rests. To compare one system by the standard of another, it is only possible to arrive at a distorted or unequal result. Islam can no more be judged by modern commonplace methods than Europe can be judged on the same lines by Islam, or than Mohammed himself whose splendid concept it was. The manners and morals of his own time must also be taken into consideration. The two creeds of Islam and Christendom have been built on different

bases, and constructed out of different material. The God of one is the God of universal nature. The God of the other is a triform Being—a metaphysical trinity in unity. Socially the Moslem is a polygamist, religiously he is an unitarian. The European is just the opposite to this. Socially he is a monogamist, religiously he is a trinitarian. In a word, the system of these two great human divisions differ as much from each other as their foot gear. That of the Moslem again conforms to nature. That is, his shoe is made to fit the foot, which narrows at the heel, and splays out at the toes. In Europe, on the contrary, the foot is made to fit the shoe, which, wide at the heel, narrows into a point at the toes. How is it possible then for two such widely divergent systems to agree?

But at least they can agree to differ. At least there is one broad base upon which they can meet. On the grounds of a common humanity, on the grounds of a common sympathy, by a common birth and a common death they are equal. It is not for Christendom to hang back. Islam is quite ready to meet her more than half-way. From the superior vantage ground of her position, it is for her to hold out the right hand of fellowship. It is for her to recognize the real worth of Islam. It is for her to respect not to contemn her great coadjutor. For her to regard

Islam, not as a foe or even a rival, so much as a great and worthy co-partner with her, in the work of civilization. From this reasonable and rational standpoint the sphere of Islam's influence should be wisely left alone. For the enforcement of Christianity on races such as those of Africa, for instance, whose system is patriarchal, can only end, as it has already done, in their utter denationalization and hybridization. To Europeanize and turn into Christians these sons of nature merely for the motive of gaining converts is impolitic, if not immoral. It but makes human mules of them. Wiser far to let them remain as they are. As well try to turn camelopards into crocodiles or pythons into hippos, as convert Africans into Europeans. Islam attempts nothing unnatural of this kind—nothing that is opposed to ethnic conditions and sociological usages. In her case she but develops the lama into the camel.

It is impossible, fatuous in fact, to ignore or even overlook the basic importance of physical environment. Even science in this respect has been backward, and very slowly recognized that geography is obviously and essentially the basis of all history—i.e. of all human action and development. The importance of climate and climatic changes on the habits, customs, temperament and character of races, has never been clearly and thoroughly realized.

Not until this has been estimated and appreciated at its true value, will it be possible for reason to override the dogmas and bigotries of short-sighted and prejudiced theology. But the day is fast approaching when this fact must be acknowledged as a universal truth. Then only will Islam and other creeds be apprised from an even and rational standpoint.

Even admitting that Islam has receded from Mohammed's moral and spiritual high water mark, this is all the more reason why the statesmen of Europe should stretch out a helping hand to assist in raising her to her former level. All the more reason why they should encourage and stimulate her to higher aims and endeavours. This assuredly would be a more dignified and statesmanlike proceeding than that which, if it does not sanction, at all events permits the good name and fame of Islam to be smirched with contumely, and to be held up before the world as a standing menace to civilization. A course such as I have suggested, is much more likely to bring about a better understanding and preparation towards any possible fusion. On the other hand, the present propaganda of active theological aggression and political indifference, is bound to make the breach wider than ever with the ultimate certainty of disruption. In face of such a climax there is but this one

remedy. As a moral and spiritual factor in the regeneration of humanity, Islam is indispensable. In her own sphere she must not be interfered with. The good of humanity is a higher cause to work for than the mere glorification of creed and sect. The cause of humanity strikes wider, deeper and higher than that of any creed or denomination. By working towards this end, by sinking denominational differences in the common stock-pot of humanity, the world at large and civilization in particular will in the end gain ever so much more.

In speaking of Islam and of Moslems as I have done, I have spoken of them as I have found them. Apart from a careful study of the Koran, my knowledge of both is based on personal facts and experiences as varied as they are extensive. In every clime and under a variety of conditions, I have been in touch with Moslems of all classes and shades, and have always found them animated by the same spirit—for race or colour makes no difference to the spirit of Islam. Always consistent and devout, always God-fearing and sincere as regards their Faith. Before all things religious, their cult, the creed of Mohammed—i.e. El Islam or self-surrender. Afghan, Arab, Baluchi, Hindustani, Somali, Turk, Egyptian, Hadendowa, Berber, Senegalese, Fulani, Hausa, Yoruba, Mandingo, Malay, I

have found them in the main Islamic to the very core. In peace or war, in camp and cantonment, working and fighting with or against them, my experience of their moral consistency and spiritual stamina has been the same. Brave to a fault, endowed with the reckless courage of the Fatalist, fearless and contemptuous of death, their fidelity to their Faith, their belief in the greatness of Mohammed, and their veneration of God, is a something that once it is rightly understood, can only be respected and appreciated at its true value. For my part, seeing as I have their splendid heroism in their own cause, and their touching devotion to those whose salt they have eaten, my feelings towards them is not only one of unmixed admiration and respect, but also of deep esteem and regard. Such men are worthy of Islam, as Islam indeed is worthy of them. Only the soul—the moral and spiritual essence—of Islam could have made them what they are, could have turned out of the dregs of barbarism a human material so truly splendid.

With experience and facts such as these before me, I for one find it impossible to forget, and only natural to acknowledge with candour, the great and magnificent part that Islam has occupied in the history of the world. In the intellectual strife of heroes who have wrestled and fought for the truth and who for

many centuries led the world, in the arena of battle and of conquest where warriors have led the van, the sons of Islam stand on a pedestal of their own making, that as the world grows older and more enlightened, will stand out in all the greater prominence. Stand out as men who have taken as great and heroic though not so sustained a part on the stage of universal history as the giants and heroes of Christendom.

Even in a study of this length it is in reality impossible to deal exhaustively with a question so wide and extensive as this, which requires a large volume to itself. But I have said enough, I trust, to show that the value of Islam as a moral and spiritual factor in the civilization of the world is very considerable. I hope too that to all who are reasonable and rational in their views, I have shown, as clearly and as concisely as it is possible to do within such narrow limits, that the so-called "*Moslem menace*" is but the wraith of an over-heated imagination—the bogie conjured up by a hectoring and arrogant theocracy, backed up, unfortunately, by an indiscreet and tactless Press, ever ready to exaggerate any piece of cheap claptrap into the sensation of the moment. Always eager to lift up even garbage such as this to the higher level of dramatic denouements, by giving undue prominence to the unreliable froth and effer-

vescence of irresponsible and excitable cranks. In a word, by a process of moral aggravation that is unworthy a great and liberal Press.

Finally, I have endeavoured to make it clear, that apart from motives of honour and high principles and consistent with the dignity of the great Aryan family, Europe should adopt towards Islam a policy of conciliation and co-operation: if for nothing else, to avoid being hoisted by her own overcharged and explosive petard. If I have done but this, then at least my labour shall not have been in vain.